

# Alternance, why, for whom?

Editorial

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M. Vita  
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M.-J. Montalescot  
G. Fehrenbach  
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## DOSSIER

Take alternance training, for example  
Italy: *ENAIIP; Regione Lombardia*  
FR of Germany: *Kreuzwerk eV*  
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Alternance training for young people – Documentation of selected texts published by the European Community and the Member States  
*M. Schelzky*

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A new concept of partnership  
*Interview Hywel Jones*

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*B. Sellin*

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Vocational training



European Centre  
for the Development  
of Vocational Training  
CEDEFOP

Bundesallee 22  
D-1000 Berlin 15

Directors: Roger Faist  
Mario Alberigo  
Corrado Politi

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## On alternance training

A definitive answer has still to be given to the question of what the term 'alternance training' actually means. Here, we intend to make a renewed attempt to settle this matter even if it is still not possible, at least at Community level, to give a final definition.

### What is alternance training?

Is it a new catch-phrase for an old kind of training, namely on-the-job training which is characterized by the firm's interest in the rapid acquisition and low-cost application of an occupational skill, as is surmised by many workers and their organizations?

Is it an attempt to introduce into all EC Member States the vocational training system which operates with varying degrees of success in the Federal Republic of Germany and other European countries?

Or is it an attempt to break away from or develop further the ideas of other international organizations, e.g. the Council of Europe with its concept of 'permanent education' or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with its concept of 'recurrent education', the implementation of which is being increasingly questioned at present?

The approach adopted in the concepts of 'permanent education' and 'recurrent education' was and is characterized by the right of the individual to education, i.e. to develop and further himself, particularly by undergoing training leading to advancement. This approach was accompanied by the readiness of education policy-makers to offer corresponding training opportunities. Here, the main emphasis was on equality of training opportunities and this had only an indirect link to socio-economic developments in the economy, society and labour market. Among other things, it was believed that education efforts could help to accelerate the reform of the economy and society.

For Cedefop, however, alternance training is not any of these three things.

It is far more a concept for the necessary reorganization of both initial vocational training of young people and continuing training for adults which foresees the linking of education/training and work. Upon completion of compulsory education it is to be open to (future) workers and the working population throughout their entire working lives. The aim is to reconcile the often conflicting interests of individuals, society and employers/firms in vocational training in a more balanced way than was the case in the traditional forms of mainly in-school or on-the-job training. It seeks to integrate both forms into a joint concept in such a way that a simple juxtaposition is avoided.

The concept of alternance training favoured by the European Community met initially with success because many people associated this with the dual system of the Federal Republic of Germany. In a climate of growing economic uncertainty this system seems to ease the transition of young people to the working world and, at the same time, to furnish them with a good occupational qualification. What is ignored or forgotten is, however, that this system too has difficulty in providing a long-term safeguard for jobs and occupational qualifications. In the Federal Republic of Germany youth unemployment, particularly in the 20 to 25 age group is inordinately high, i.e. at a period in their lives when most young people have completed their vocational training. In other countries, by contrast, it is usually the 18 to 19 year olds who are the most severely affected by unemployment. In the short term an increase in the number of training places, as for example under the dual system in the Federal Republic of Germany, does indeed lower the number of under 20 year olds seeking employment on the labour market; in the long term, however, retraining and continuing training problems arise for those young people who have undergone relatively rigid and highly specialized initial training. They then join

the numerous ranks of older workers whose skills have already become obsolete or who never had the benefit of initial vocational training.

The concept of alternance training should not, therefore, be oriented solely towards young people and initial training but, bearing this in mind, should also help to structure continuing training, retraining and advanced training. The advantage of this concept is that it is situated at the intersection of training, labour market, economic and social policies and helps to combine elements from all these policy areas. Thus, it would seem better suited to accompany the structural changes taking place in the EC and in individual Member States than the concepts which were developed mainly along the lines of educational policy at the end of the 1960s, beginning of the 1970s.

This second special issue on alternance training, published by Cedefop, seeks on the one hand to document the development of alternance training in EC Member States at the beginning of the 1980s and on the other to examine and discuss this concept itself in the light of these more recent developments.

There is, however, an obvious danger that even if decision-makers are in principle willing to accelerate the necessary reform of their systems, there will be shortcomings in the realization stage and alternance training may be swallowed up by the concept of the social guarantee to young people. This concept is at present very much at the centre of the Community debate although no one is very sure whether this will mean the guaranteeing of jobs or training places or both along the lines of alternance training\*.

The ambivalence surrounding the concept of alternance training can only be removed through its concrete application in each Member State. This special issue again reveals that individual countries emphasize widely-differing aspects of this concept.

\* cf. interview with H. C. Jones in this issue.

# Editorial

Certain convergent trends have however been identified.

The first special edition, No 4/1980, sought to present the approaches adopted by Member States and to link them to the considerations of the European Commission and Cedefop on this subject.

The passing of the Council's resolution in December 1979\* was and is an important date in this respect. This provided the first conceptual framework which was to be seen as a means of encouraging the Member States to extend and develop their systems of vocational training with a view to improving cooperation between school and firm. This move was prompted by:

■ the growing problems facing young people during the transition from school to steady employment which, aside from prevailing socio-economic framework conditions, had their roots in their age;

■ the fact that no further offer of vocational education or continuing training could be made to an average 40 % of young people in the EC, i.e. there was a severe quantitative and qualitative shortage of training places for young men and women wishing to learn an occupation;

■ the particularly high level of unemployment among young people who were disadvantaged with regard to education, training and employment opportunities because of their social, regional and gender-specific circumstances.

A further reason for this EC initiative was the debate on the more even distribution of work and the reduction in working hours. To begin with, the project for the development of alternance training was linked to this as it included such issues as release for training or educational leave for older workers, too. During the negotiations with the Council, the two debates were later separated and at the same time alternance training was oriented solely towards the social and professional problems facing young people during the transition from school to work. This meant a considerable restriction, and its effects, some of them extremely negative, are felt even today.

Whereas many of the young people affected have still not been able to obtain a steady job despite the fact that the quality of their training has partly improved, many older workers have been excluded from the work process because they did not have the skills

required to cope with the new technologies and resulting work reorganization which were introduced.

Alternance training should be regarded as the first step towards the necessary reorganization of vocational and general continuing training. At present much ground has still to be covered before such an attitude finds general acceptance. This is because political priorities have resulted in almost all programmes being directed one-sidedly towards young people. Very often no consideration is given to the effects such preferential treatment will have on disadvantaged older workers. Effective or *de facto* restrictions were the practical outcome for the latter and they carried the risk of further reducing the continuing training opportunities open to this group. There is a danger that such a biased policy could lead to contradictory developments:

Very often young people and adults are alternately taken to task: young people because they do not have the right attitude to or enough experience of work (how are they supposed to acquire these if the number of training places is insufficient?), and adults because they lack appropriate and sufficiently advanced skills to enable them to keep pace with developments (how are they supposed to obtain them if no corresponding training opportunities are open to them?). The ultimate aim of alternance training is to improve the link between education/training and work throughout an individual's entire working life. The priority which is rightly given to young people must not, however, be at the expense of other groups of workers, e.g. women, older workers or foreign workers.

A one-sided priority such as this could lead to a conflict between generations unless less qualified older workers are also offered continuing training possibilities along the lines of alternance between work and education.

A series of investigations into labour-market-oriented continuing training, initiated in the meantime by Cedefop, stresses the particularly difficult situation facing workers whose initial skills are either limited or very basic.

Current Cedefop investigations on labour-market-oriented continuing training are to be evaluated during 1983. Their findings will probably support this approach and will supply decision-makers with aids for the realization of their projects.

For example, the extensive application of innovative collective agreements which foresee employment-linked continuing training, the prolongation of training periods for young people, a reduction in the working lifetime and weekly working hours and the extension of annual leave, could make an important contribution to the discussion on reducing working hours and more evenly distributing employment among all groups of workers. In many cases, however, the framework conditions for such collective agreements would have to be created by the respective legislative bodies. The advantage of such a link between work and education over other measures aiming to achieve a more even distribution of employment is that collective agreements can adjust in a flexible manner to specific sectoral and regional needs; there would be no need to introduce a general ruling for all workers. Furthermore, the danger of a conflict between the generations could be avoided as older workers and young people entering the labour market for the first time would not be played off against each other.

Finally, the more generous provision of continuing training opportunities for older workers could perhaps prevent the increasing division of the labour market into a steady labour market with relatively highly qualified workers in larger firms in the public and private sectors and an unsteady, cyclically very dependent labour market characterized by a large number of poorly qualified workers permanently threatened by unemployment.

As mentioned in issue No 8/1982, we are convinced that vocational and continuing training cannot directly do away with unemployment. Investments in the vocational and general continuing training of young and older workers can, however, contribute considerably towards a more even distribution of employment and thereby indirectly lessen what is for the most part structural unemployment. Here, however, the necessary provision should not only be effective once unemployment has gained a hold. The provision must take on more of a preventive character which it had only in special cases up to now.

The relative success of the Council's resolution of December 1979, which is documented in this issue, cannot, as mentioned above, be explained in social and labour terms only. In the Member States which are tackling the reorganization of their vocational training systems – as is particularly

\* cf. *Official Journal of the European Communities* C 1, 3. 1. 1980, and/or *Vocational training No 4/1980*, pp. 84 *et seq.*

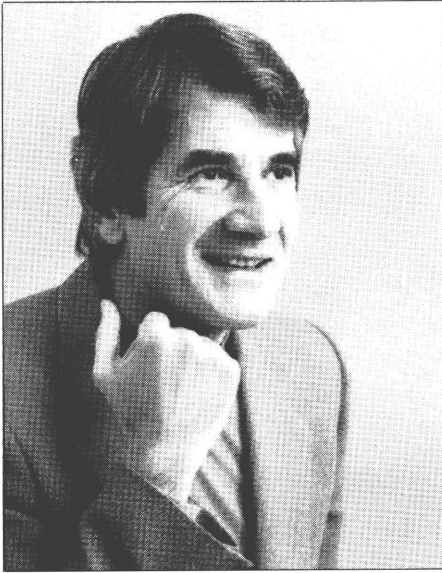
the case in France and the United Kingdom – the debate focused far more on economic, competitive and technological arguments.

A closer link between education/training and work allows constant feedback with

regard to the correction, adjustment and replacement of training contents and objectives in line with developments in the labour world. Thus, the education/school authorities do not have to completely renew the curricula and training regulations in each case. Because of these advantages and

national efforts to promote the competitiveness of the economy through investment in training, alternance training has become the focal point of interest, in its own right and independently of the social problem of youth unemployment.

*B. S.*



# Why alternance training?

*Jean-Pierre Jallade*

Deputy Director of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy, University of Paris-Dauphine

## A threefold observation

The linking of work and training has grown enormously in popularity today owing to three observed influences:

■ First of all, many young people find it hard to make the transition from school to working life in the current difficult employment situation. The problem facing them may be massive unemployment, the rate of which is generally even higher among young people than in other sectors of the community, or the fact that the type of work they can find is 'marginal', in other words temporary or occasional or odd jobs alternating with periods of idleness. However that may be, the trend is too widespread to be shrugged off by the authorities. The young people who find it hardest on the labour market are those whose education and training have been poor or otherwise inadequate. Any improvement that can be brought about by alternating work and training will help to make those young people more employable and smooth the path for them in their first contact with the working world.

■ Next, there can be no doubt that most young people who leave full-time education at or even a few years after the minimum school-leaving age, between 16 and 20, often have no specific qualifications, at least as understood by employers. They know nothing about the world of work. In some instances that ignorance reaches disastrous proportions and may be the reason why young people start off on the wrong foot during the period of transition between

school and working life. A false start then may cost them dear, pushing them further out onto the fringes of society.

■ Finally, there is admittedly some disenchantment with the idea of extending full-time education as a method of solving young people's difficulties. Many observers feel that such measures merely broaden the gap between school and working life and slow down their progress to adulthood by prolonging their dependent status. Many young people are averse to extended education of a purely academic kind and are the first to criticize it as 'pointless' or as irrelevant to their needs or tastes.

The difficulties have grown worse in the current economic climate and, in an attempt to solve them, many European countries have introduced forms of training for school-leavers based on the educational principle of alternating academic education with work experience. At first the ventures were undoubtedly temporary in nature: the authorities saw them as stopgap measures designed to overcome what was thought to be a short-lived difficulty. But there is nothing like a lasting and worsening crisis for making what is temporary permanent. Today we are clearly moving towards the idea of a transition period of varying duration in which the young person is no longer a full-time student nor yet a full-time worker. He would move from school to a network of training programmes, operating on the principle of alternating classroom work with on-the-job experience. A new style of apprenticeship is the primary component of this system, although measures have recent-

ly been introduced complementing and broadening that apprenticeship to ensure that every young person without a job may benefit. Examples are the *contrat emploi-formation* in France, the Youth Opportunities Programme and the New Training Initiative in the United Kingdom, the Work Experience Programme in Ireland and the *contratto di formazione a durata determinata* in Italy, whose shared aim is to combine different degrees of on-the-job experience with further education or training in the school or training centre. In many respects, the 'dual system' of apprenticeship in the Federal Republic of Germany is the most advanced instance of full-scale alternance, a long-established and broadly-based achievement that is rightly envied by other countries. It is true that the 'German model' is now being revised, but this does not invalidate the concept of alternating work and training. Even though certain methods may be under scrutiny, such reforms bear witness to the vitality of an educational principle.

This work and training network has three goals: guidance, training and integration in working life.

■ The purpose of **guidance** is to introduce young people to the world of work and help them to discover their own abilities and main interests so that they can make a considered choice of a career. To combine work and training is a good way of achieving this aim.

Work experience over a period of training helps to avoid hasty decisions reached in

ignorance of what a job actually entails. Training, in turn, enables young people to make better use of their experience of work, taking a critical look at it and drawing their own conclusions, thus widening the options open to them.

■ The purpose of **training** is to develop the skills that youngsters have been unable to acquire during the period of compulsory schooling. In this respect, alternance training goes further than purely school-based technical education, since it promotes a knowledge of how to act in a real-life situation and ensures that the young person can adapt that knowledge to the realities of the working world.

■ **Integration into working life** is also greatly facilitated by the linking of work and training, as it assists in the youngster's search for stable employment in a field in which his skills can be used. The alternation of education and practical experience does away with the traditional, fairly rigid dichotomy that existed when full-time education and training were followed by full-time employment. It is well suited to the process of gradual integration with the young person taking on a series of temporary or part-time jobs, periods of activity sandwiched between periods of unemployment and 'interim' work situations in which he is not yet totally committed to his future career. It assists in the process whereby the young person settles down in a full-time job. On his side, he can gradually discern what he really wants; moreover, the employer comes to know him better, paving the way for recruitment to permanent employment.

## Criticisms of the system

Objections to the wider introduction of alternance training do exist. The first of these, perhaps the hardest to remove, is that the current situation is scandalous. It is true that the situation may seem incomprehensible in many respects. How can young people be under-qualified, how can the school system be said to have failed, when they study far longer than their parents? Is the excessive mobility of young people not deplorable in that it is a 'refusal to work'? How can one accept some of the employers' attitudes to young people ('they don't know how to do anything') without protest?

The reply to these questions becomes clear provided that the following arguments are accepted:

■ The extension of full-time compulsory schooling is no solution to the problem, for the school alone cannot teach young people the skills that can be put to immediate use in a job. This is not the role of the school. Some people see this view as a criticism of the institution of school, but it is only an attempt to distinguish clearly between the roles of the different institutions involved in the acquisition of skills.

■ 'Excessive' job mobility among the young is comprehensible: it is merely a reflection of the need for guidance, a need all the more pressing when schools are so cut off from the world of work. The young can hardly be criticized if they opt for 'on-the-job guidance' and try out various jobs to find for themselves where their tastes and abilities lie rather than deferring to careers counsellors in the school.

■ It is easier to understand why employers feel that young people do not know what to do or how to behave when one realizes that employers are completely excluded from the training process; on occasions they have no contact at all with a youngster until the day he joins the firm. If he is to be thrown into the deep end in this way, it would be far more surprising if he does not make a splash!

It is clear, then, that alternance is an appropriate solution in the current situation. The reason why so many young people find it hard to take the step from full-time schooling to work is that the change is too abrupt, too demanding. It is only common sense that youngsters should go through a transition period during which they can make their first acquaintance with the working world while completing their formal education. What could be more logical than that they should take advantage of the sandwich arrangement to guide them in a world with which they are unfamiliar, and that employers should give the youngsters some sort of a trial before offering them permanent posts?

Another objection to the development of linked work and training is often heard: that it merely segregates young people on the labour market. Being neither students nor fully fledged workers, it is argued, they are victims of a deplorable form of discrimination – worse, institutionalized discrimination. One point should be made clear regarding this important issue: on the labour market, an employer will never consider a youngster with only the compulsory standard of formal education to be on a par with a worker who has done a job for

several years. Indeed, to treat them as equals would be unfair to the more seasoned worker, as it would be tantamount to denying the value of experience acquired over a period of years working in a firm. It is by no means 'unfair' to expect a young person to go through a transition period – and a fairly short period at that – before he acquires all the rights of all full-time worker. There is nothing to be gained by attempting to impose theoretical equality if it is not borne out in practice.

One last objection is that the linking of work and training cannot in itself solve the problem of employment. This is true. The arrangement cannot and should not serve as a smoke screen to camouflage a failure to create jobs. Going even further, one might say that it will succeed only if job prospects also improve, since the ultimate goal is employment. Nothing would be more dangerous to the concept of alternance than to use its novelty to arouse hopes of employment that the labour market cannot then fulfil. In other words, wider introduction of the system must be combined with a forceful youth employment policy.

## A few practical ideas

The value of alternance training lies in the combination of periods of learning in a training establishment and on the job. This should be more than the mere juxtaposition of two forms of training experience. To ensure that one form of experience rein-



*Work instead of unemployment.*

forces the other, there must be careful coordination between learning in the school and workplace. This is the key to the success of the arrangement. In many schemes that claim to alternate work with training, the time spent in a company is seen as no more than an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge acquired at school, as in the case of the conventional work experience period for pupils nearing the end of their education. Such experience is indisputably useful in giving an idea of what the world of work is like, but it is of limited value as a means of training in that it is considered as only of secondary importance. In the acquisition of skills, it is seen as far less useful than theoretical learning.

In planning effective alternance methods, to avert this risk of undervaluing on-the-job training, young people must be encouraged to use their first-hand experience as a point of departure for thinking critically about work. The purpose of this review, which must take place in the training establishment away from the workplace, will be to give the young person a better understanding of his environment and develop his ability to transfer skills acquired in one working situation to another.

Alternance training can be effective only if there is radical reappraisal of its methods. There is every reason for starting with the status and attitude of the recipients of alternance training, which will be very different from their status and attitude in the course of traditional school-based vocational training. It is the essence of the new solution that young people should enter into contractual obligations which they have accepted of their own free will. Work experience places the young on an equal footing with other adults and, ideally, gives them an opportunity to assume responsibility as a member of a group. These are the features that should help young people to grow up and face up to their obligations as adults. At a time when many people in the teaching world complain about the passivity of young people forced to stay on at school against their will and their attitude that the world owes them a living, it is a change to be welcomed. It goes without saying that the relationship between the trainer and the trainee should no longer be based on the traditional authority of the former over the latter. Every effort must be made to avoid recreating the 'classroom atmosphere' that the young now find unacceptable and to adopt 'active' teaching methods, placing the emphasis on team work and group

discussion. Young people must be encouraged to participate more actively in the process of training, to bolster what is often their wavering sense of motivation.

Effective alternance schemes help the youngster to appreciate the educational value of work experience. In setting greater store on workplace training, the intention is not to deny the advantages of the school or training centre in offering systematic instruction, nor to argue that any work situation is educational, but merely to strike the right balance between training at school and training on the job. Many trainers feel that a number of skills can best be acquired at work, subject to certain conditions associated with the setting-up of appropriate work situations and the presence of skilled men to offer guidance at the workplace.

If alternance training is to develop there must be an appropriate institutional structure, whose salient features are consultation, decentralization and joint responsibility.

On the question of consultation, the main conclusion reached by the seminar on alternance training for young people organized by Cedefop and the Commission of the European Communities, Directorate-General for Social Affairs, in June 1980 is still valid: There should be no development of alternance training without the desire for dialogue and consultation among the social partners and between the social partners and the authorities.'

Alternance programmes must be diversified if they are to adapt to local needs and therefore their administration must be decentralized as far as possible. It goes without saying that the decentralization of responsibility must be combined with systematic monitoring and evaluation of training programmes. It is absolutely vital to ensure that all parties meet minimum standards of quality and honour the obligations into which they have entered.

Finally, joint responsibility in the conduct of training programmes is particularly necessary when two worlds so far apart – the company on the one hand and the school or training centre on the other – try to pool their resources to set up a common training project. The post of 'training manager', symbolic of this unity, will thus be vital to the development of alternance training.

In-company work experience and on-the-job training combine to form an essential ingredient of alternance training. Unless

employers are actively involved, the principle of linking work with training and education can be no more than a pious hope, without any real practical application. It is essential that they should be persuaded to participate in the training effort and to organize their own contribution to training in an appropriate manner.

Very many large companies have always been conscious of their responsibility for training both their established workforce and the people they recruit, and no campaign is needed to bring it to their notice. There is no doubt that a flourishing 'tradition' in this field has contributed to the firmly rooted establishment of the 'dual' training system in the Federal Republic of Germany. In other countries, it may be necessary to make employers more aware of their responsibilities by information campaigns, highlighting the potential advantages to the employer of alternance training. Financial aid from the government will often be a persuasive argument.

The methods whereby employers may participate in the training effort differ, and this diversity should be retained if the aim is to encourage their involvement. Large companies and organizations sometimes have their own training centres which may be made available for alternance training. Smaller concerns may pool their resources to set up a training centre, appointing a training manager to run it. Others may have facilities that could be used for educational as well as production purposes with only minor and inexpensive adjustments to the organization of work and personnel policy. The training manager may persuade the employer to counsel and inform trainees, arrange for them to work on several jobs in turn and give more experienced workers an opportunity to give a helping hand with the induction of young people, without unduly disrupting production work. In companies that have traditionally accepted training activities, the presence of a senior training officer in the personnel department will pave the way for any changes that may be needed.

The contribution of employers to alternance training will be all the more fruitful if they can be persuaded to help with the planning of that training. Who is better placed to know the training value of different jobs within a company than those who work on them? Who better to organize that helping hand for young trainees?

Alternance training, then, is probably a major innovation in the organization of



society, but it is still precariously placed. It must be protected and a voice raised on its behalf at the highest level of government. The ideal would be to bring all alternance training under a single authority. Its administration should be flexible enough to enable different schemes to operate in different ways, but forceful enough to make it a political force to be reckoned with.

Who should 'govern' alternance training? Who should control the administrative and financial machinery that fuels it? There is no simple answer to these questions. Several

ministries have traditionally been involved – Education or Employment, for example – but local authorities, the employers and the unions should all have a say as well. Once again, innovation will be needed. In the final analysis, the future of alternance training will certainly be determined by the ability of individual links in the social structure to communicate with each other.

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*Unless employers are actively involved, the principle of linking work with training and education can be no more than a pious hope, without any real practical application.*



# Alternance: Assumptions, conditions, advantages

*Michele Colasanto*

Director of the Institute of Industrial Sociology at the Catholic University of Milan

In the process of social innovation, it often happens that the initial phase seethes with a wealth of schemes and experimentation but is followed by periods of slower development of both theory and practical applications.

With alternance – in a number of ways and in some countries at least – what now seems to be the case is that, following the years of its introduction and initial experimentation, more careful thought is being given to the difficulties, conditions and requirements of alternance itself; people are starting to question its real advantages, the cost-benefit ratio and the feasibility and timing of its general adoption.

Without claiming to draw up a balance sheet of the situation, some purpose may be served at this juncture by an attempt to review the likelihood of the revival or, if you prefer, the strengthening of what has come to be seen over the years as an ‘alternance movement’, on a par with other movements designed to improve the social order – such as the movement for improving the quality of working life.

## The conditions for wider adoption of alternance

Any such consideration cannot of course fail to take account of the specific nature of the various socio-economic and institutional contexts. It is one thing to speak about the wider adoption of alternance in a decentralized, diversified system of training like the British; it is another to refer to a system such as the Italian, which is still highly central-

ized and tends to be homogeneous. Nevertheless, in the light of an analysis of the experiments conducted in the last few years, conclusions can be formulated which are broadly representative of the different national situations and which can be grouped by reference to two aspects of the analysis:

the training aspect;  
the work aspect.

□ **On the training side** are what are obviously key questions regarding the ability of the education system to make full use of all the educational value of work experience, and the likelihood that this will happen.

These are questions which should obviously be tackled with the appropriate disciplinary tools. Nevertheless, there are certain pointers to the factors indispensable to the linking of work and study, the factors that affect the feasibility of the acceptance and use of work by the school system as an educational factor. These pointers may be summarized as follows.

### ■ *Organization of on-the-job training*

Alternance calls for a considerable degree of flexibility in the organization of work within the training system. Provided that it is seen as more than a single brief interlude within the training process, the *stage* – an on-the-job training period for students – requires flexible criteria for the planning of courses, ensuring that adequate goals are set for the work experience as it is gradually acquired. This is the reason why alternance is in at least some respects a continual process of experimentation, in that each *stage* should be planned and prepared in the

light of the subjects and disciplines involved and its effectiveness then monitored.

### ■ *Autonomy of the training system*

The first step towards this organization of on-the-job training and continual experimentation in alternance is to make the training systems autonomous, at least in the sense of setting up institutional terms of reference that allow such systems to organize their own affairs and conduct their own relations with the outside world.

Autonomy obviously implies that a training unit is free to arrive at its own agreements with business firms or service centres in order to tap sources of specialist skills. It also implies a measure of financial independence in the management of the resources it needs in implementing alternance projects.

### ■ *Teaching staff qualifications*

If there is one factor that consistently emerges from the analysis of experiments in alternance, it is the need to provide the teaching staff with specific technological, sociological and other skills.

Obviously an all-round qualification is inconceivable. Some of the skills mentioned could and should be acquired outside the training system. However, that training system must incorporate certain types of knowledge and ability, especially of a methodological nature, that are needed if alternance is to become a permanent part of the training process.

Thought should also be given to the possible implications of *stages* from the standpoint of industrial socialization and educational resocialization, through an appreciation of

the use of means such as questionnaires, testing, interviews and case studies to determine tendencies and changes in attitude with regard to work and education.

#### ■ *Availability of information*

A corollary to the qualification of teaching staff is the availability of an adequate quantity and quality of information regarding developments in jobs and, more generally, the labour market and the organization of work. To some extent, the problem also arises in school and careers counselling, although the terms and scale of the problem differ depending on the accumulated experience of each individual country.

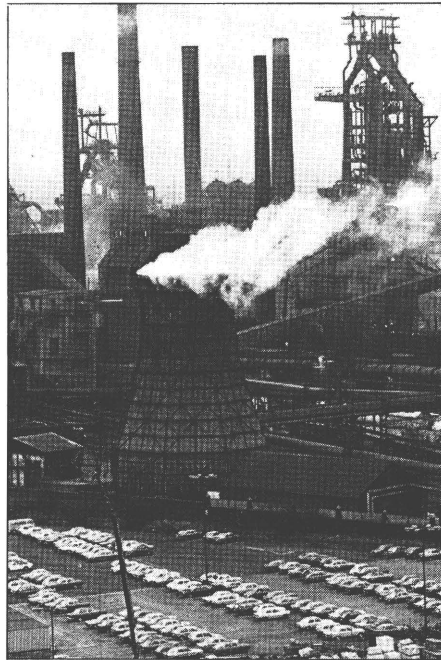
Significant experiments in this field are being conducted by CEREQ (Centre d'études et de recherches sur les qualifications) in France and COIC (the Manpower Services Commission's Careers and Occupational Information Centre) in Britain. In general, however, some places lag far behind (as in Italy), while in others the information is not always adequate or relevant to training. It should be added that teacher training systems must bear some share of the blame in that little effort is made to train teachers in information retrieval and the use of the sources of information that do in fact exist.

#### □ *On the work side*

We have discussed some of the main demands made of the training systems in implementing alternance. On the work side, in the sphere of productive organizations, there are at least three types of requirement.

#### ■ *The advantages to the employer*

According to all the evidence, it is a waste of breath to try to persuade industrialists, and especially businessmen, that they should be genuinely receptive to alternance in general and *stages* in particular, that they should not be content with the good intentions that employers' associations are so wont to air, without discussing the advantages and disadvantages to the employers of accepting *stagiaires*. It is a problem that has institutional, organizational and union implications as well as the obvious financial implications. In other words, the constraints and difficulties generated by the presence of trainees in productive organizations are not only related to the loss of production time. There are other factors: an occasional failure to clarify the various responsibilities incurred by that presence; lack of foresight as to how the trainees will fit into the



*The productive organization as a place for training.*

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structure of interactive relationships that exists in any organization; and the omission of any definition in collective labour agreements of the ensuing working relationships. These issues should be tackled on two fronts: by doing away with institutional constraints (such as the obligation in Italy to put young trainees onto production work); and by creating a system of incentives (this will obviously vary from country to country) to offset the obligations directly and indirectly incurred through alternance. To return to Italy, for example, if experience in a *stage* were to be made a preferential criterion for the engagement of staff, this would help to bring about a substantial increase in the number of on-the-job training posts\*.

#### ■ *The planning of on-the-job training posts*

Expansion along these lines is subject to a further condition, namely the possibility of planned, coordinated action: first, to avoid the risk of some sectors of business and

\* It will be recalled that, in Italy, there are stringent controls over the hiring of manpower. Preference is given to a system whereby a 'placement list' is drawn up and points allotted to applicants, the employer being obliged to take the people with the highest score who have moved up to the top of the list. Employers' requests to recruit named individuals are discouraged. A more flexible arrangement that leaves employers free to choose their own staff would be welcomed by them, as enterprise suffers from the rigidity of the system.

industry that would inevitably lead to a rejection of alternance; and second, to ensure that *stages* genuinely achieve the goals that have been set.

It would be useful to maintain registers of training courses, involving business firms, unions, educational bodies and the institutions responsible for the transition between school and work. These would be used in the effective planning, use and supervision of on-the-job training posts, matching the requirements of both sides, training and production.

#### ■ *The productive organization as a place of training*

A third problem that arises on the 'work side' is flexibility: firms and workplaces in general should not only be receptive to the idea of alternance but also willing to collaborate with others in implementing it. The school must be able to look to business and industry for help in both the planning and the supervision of *stages*. There must be a two-way channel between the people in the school and the people in the production organization entrusted with this responsibility. Firms should be willing and able to take on the additional obligation of allocating some of their employees to the part-time task of acting as go-betweens and 'correspondents' for the educational establishments or 'tutors' for the *stagiaires*, giving these employees the opportunity of acquiring the necessary expertise.

## **The rationale of alternance**

In the form described, the set of conditions imposed by alternance becomes a challenge, especially in view of all the rigidity characteristic of both training and production organizations and the profound lack of communication between such organizations due to the diverging levels of language and jargon. Like all the challenges associated with social phenomena, therefore, the ultimate condition – and one that prevails over all the others – is cultural: alternance presupposes a widespread acceptance of the factors which are the justification for its existence. The success of alternance training on its introduction may depend on the strength of support for the postulates of discontinuity and polycentrism of training in individual countries.

It is unlikely that experiments such as *stages* will in practice be adopted widely enough for the training purposes assigned to them

so long as the idea persists of a highly school-centred training system, with educational bodies having a quasi-monopoly in the educational function. Without going so far as Illich in his thought-provoking study, we would say that the educational and sociological literature on the subject has already shown that socialization (the primary and not the secondary processes) results from a combination of a number of 'agencies': school and the family, of course, but also the media, the 'peer group' and, in the case of vocational behaviour, work experience. These can act retrospectively, establishing a complex of de-socialization and re-socialization actions.

This is a justification for using the workplace as a place of training, although the training systems continue to be deeply distrustful of such organizations. Their distrust arises from an entirely justifiable worry: that concern for production might override concern for the trainees. There are other latent reasons for distrust, rooted in the traditional mutual lack of understanding between education and work, as is apparent in the indifference of educationalists towards the working world and their more or less conscious acceptance of stereotyped ideas, the dichotomy between manual and intellectual work.

A more complex issue is discontinuity of training – by which we imply the right to take up, leave and return to training over a period of time, the transition not just from school to work but also from work back to school. Discontinuity of training may seem to differ from alternance as a means of communication between the training system and the working world, but in the solutions which have in fact been implemented, the models based on alternance, it is the element of discontinuity that is the most striking innovation in our social fabric. Without necessarily going so far as the utopian models of systematic alternation of periods of work with periods of study, communication between school and work will improve if there are opportunities for each sub-system to penetrate the other, especially if training systems are used both by young people and by those who have already worked. In other words, although the more utopian elements of alternance theory may be rejected, the strategies of recurring education and training embodied in alternance are becoming more urgent year by year as a result of the economic crisis, production cut-backs and the pressures to improve the quality of life.

The recession creates a challenge for training because of the need to retrain the unemployed. In its turn, the pressure to improve the quality of life will bring about an increase in leisure and an extension of sabbaticals for educational purposes, which can be used to take up the opportunities that life and work may offer.

In both cases, the consequence is that the training system is now expected to satisfy the needs of adults as well as young persons; at the same time, it is not always easy or possible to distinguish between what is a vocational need and what is not\*.

If we combine the 'rationale' of polycentrism and plurality of training agencies with that of discontinuity (essentially bound up with the prospect of continuing education), what emerges is a picture of a well organized, smoothly running training system in which their value to the organization of education – in its narrow sense, a series of alternative and/or complementary channels such as apprenticeship, vocational training,

training contracts for young persons on their first job, etc. – is fully recognized. Within this organization, alternance would be a normal feature of training processes directed, partly through their structure, towards better communication with the working world. Perhaps the most important point following from what has been stated is that alternance would not be rigidly linked with experience of the *stage* but be a series of opportunities varying with the type of training channel and the levels at which these opportunities arise. In practice, depending on the model adopted, alternance ultimately would assume the form of:

- work experience in the lower and intermediate levels of education, primarily of educational significance;
- apprenticeships in the final years of education, more strictly job-oriented;
- *stages* proper, as a channel of vocational training which may incorporate a substantial part of the whole training process;
- alternance in reverse, such as the arrangement whereby an employee goes back to apprenticeship or takes leave for educational purposes, or in situations requiring retraining or a change of occupation;

\* The reader is referred to M. Colasanto's discussion of the subject in 'Adult education and social changes', *Cedefop Vocational training, Issue 9, September 1982*, pp. 9 – 11.



*Technological explosion.*

■ work experience within the training organization, for example with a view to stipulating agreements on specific subcontracted work;

■ structural alternance connected with the implementation of training contracts;

■ etc.

All this would be in a training context in which 'secondary' experience, acquired as a preliminary or corollary to alternance training, might be turned to good account, such as visits to firms or refresher training for teachers on the problems of work, possibly sending the teachers on *stages* as well.

### Alternance as a response to social change

One question arises at this point: if alternance is in every respect a challenge to the rigidity of the training and production worlds, how likely is it that the challenge will be met? In view of the present constraints, the prospects are not very bright, as demonstrated by the difficulty in obtaining general acceptance of alternance, or at least a wider application than at present in individual countries. Nevertheless, there are factors in current socio-economic trends which seem to reinforce what has been defined as the 'rationale' of alternance.

Considered in relation to the labour market, these factors may be summarized as follows:

#### ■ *Changes on the demand side*

Two types of change in particular should be mentioned: those connected with the overwhelming process of technological innovation now taking place and those connected with the introduction of greater informality in the sphere of production.

This process of innovation is a 'technological explosion' which will profoundly alter the nature of production systems in advanced industrial countries. There is no need to go over the problems so clearly presented by economists, politicians and the unions in every country as well as within the European Community and other international bodies. We will merely mention the great migration which will follow the 'third industrial revolution' – a migration whose socio-economic implications will be just as great as those of industrialization itself. It will not be a geographical migration but rather a massive switch of jobs from the industrial to the service sector. Such a

change will have an obvious effect on the need for vocational retraining and upgrading of skills. The labour market will also be far more diversified and fragmented, and there will be a foreseeable growth in both overall and individual mobility of labour. There is bound to be a continual increase in the number of people who have to switch careers in the course of their working lives. More and more individuals will have to retrain for a job in a different sector from the one for which they have originally trained.

The growing emphasis on informality in the production sphere is reflected in all those activities generally regarded as characteristic of the 'parallel economy', taking the practical form of the decentralization of production, working from home, consumption of one's own products, etc. This trend is partly connected with the 'technological explosion' and all the major innovations to which it has led such as robotics, information technology and telematics. The shift in emphasis is both objective and subjective, in that observers and practitioners have

been paying growing attention to it for some years past. 'Progress' is now identified with the 'small' and 'informal', not just with the 'large' and 'formal'. In terms of work, this typifies and reinforces what has been said on the consequences of the 'technological explosion', in the sense that careers may in the future be a mixture of formal and informal work (over a period of time, but also together at points in time), with entry to and exit from the respective sectors and also with dual employment or a combination of work and training in anticipation of a change of occupation.

#### ■ *The changes on the supply side*

Of equal importance are the changes in the supply of labour. No jobs policy today is likely to have the slightest chance of success unless it influences both demand and supply. The changes to which we refer are of the structural type, typically associated with raising standards of education, but also of a cultural nature. In particular, attitudes towards work have changed. In the present situation of extensive pluralism of trends and attitudes, it is difficult to identify any



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dominant 'culture of labour'. The kind of research in vogue a few years ago, based on the hypothesis of the growing rejection of work, particularly by the young, was certainly simplistic. Nevertheless, sociological research seems to confirm that the focus of living has gradually shifted from work to non-work, starting in the 1960s; in some cases there seems to have been a decline in the centrality of work. Even if the decline is not regarded as general, however, the strengthening of postmaterialistic values (self-expression, independence, the search for freedom, etc.) has affected trends and behaviour both within and outside work. In working life, there has been growing rejection of alienating activities (although such terms as alienation are vague, at least sociologically) and work that does not live up to expectations. Outside work, the 'vital worlds' of family, clubs, voluntary service, etc. have become more important than before, anticipating the adoption of post-materialistic values. In some situations, this is expressed in a growing quest for the meaning of life, while in others there remains perhaps the hope that private life will compensate for what is happening in public and in working life (which, in many people's experience today, is unemployment, underemployment or precarious employment).

What, then, is the scenario emerging in the light of the changes on both the demand and the supply side? Without claiming to make specific predictions, the following assumptions are suggested:\*

■ The current tendency regarding the role of the individual in society seems to be a move away from rigid compartmentalization to greater flexibility: the various roles in life – at work, in the family, social, etc. – are tending to intercommunicate rather than being kept strictly separate. The result will be a change from monocentrism of life (where the concern is a single, specific sphere of existence) to polycentrism (where the concern is spread over all spheres of existence, such as family, work and leisure, in a more balanced way).

■ This general tendency (undoubtedly promoted by a reduction in working hours) will include a greater desire for self-determination in the processes of life and a move to a circular rather than linear conception of time. The processes of life will be experienced in a different way once progress through life is not from one set stage to the next.

\* On these points, cf. a recent study produced by the Agnelli Foundation, *Risposte al futuro: una società flessibile*, Turin, 1982.

■ In other words, life need not be a steady progression from one discrete phase to the next, such as training – work – retirement. Its pattern may be a continuous alternation of training, work and leisure. This progression may be more systematic and less random than today, without going so far as the utopian models we have mentioned. This is not the place to discuss the extent to which such a scenario will exist or the speed at which it will be achieved: the variables are too many and too complex. One factor is that a good deal of suspicion and prejudice about the trends described have been generated by the cultural concepts which we derive from our experience of industrialization. The suspicion and prejudice become even more marked when, rightly or wrongly, the permanent changes are seen as ushering in a new epoch. When one is on the brink of the unknown and unexplored, the urge is to look to the past and cling to the certainty of what has been seen and experienced. Nevertheless, if our detailed analysis is at all valid, it is obvious that alternance between study and work, in all its forms, will be a natural and obvious part of the scenario. It will also be one of the most forceful means that institutions can bring to bear in their attempts to solve the problems and meet the needs arising in the changes that are taking place.

# Linking work and training: the social and economic objectives

*Jean Montenat*

Member of the Executive Committee, European Youth Forum

Why, in European society of the 1970s, did the concept of alternance come so much to the fore as to become a political objective, culminating in the framework created by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of 18 December 1979? The reply to this question is not necessarily simple. The success of alternance training cannot be put down merely to the fact that it enjoyed a vogue among educationalists, although there was a tendency to regard it as the panacea for a wide range of ills.

We feel that alternance is relevant to three interlinking contradictions:

- Although the school offers young people access to knowledge, it does little or nothing to prepare them for working life.
- With the wholesale development of educational systems, education has sometimes been so inappropriate as to cause some young people to reject all school-centred forms of education or training, handicapping them even further in their attempts to enter the working world and find employment.
- The needs created by rapid technological progress and radical changes on the labour market cannot be met by pre-set training as part of inflexible programmes and structures.

The balance that countries had apparently achieved in their traditional education and training systems was disrupted by the employment crisis, and the contradictions became intolerable once economic recession had led to long queues of young people at the doors of employment agencies. Unemployment was the catalyst. Significantly, it was at this juncture that the concept of linking work and training emerged, quickly

to be hailed as the stopgap, and then the structural, solution to the problem of integrating the young in the working world.

## Temptations and deviations

In this process, not everyone's motives were crystal pure. Some of the arguments in favour of alternance smacked of ambiguity, a vague mixture of progressive utopianism and reactionary corporatism. When we take a closer look at the practice of most of the projects in the 1970s using alternance training to help young people find jobs, a fairly consistent pattern becomes apparent:

- a sketchy type of training was paralleled by temporary employment;
- the social status of young people remained precarious and they did not enjoy the social guarantees offered by law or management/union agreements;
- subsidies were granted to companies and organizations acting as occasional employers of the young.

It would of course be an abuse if alternance training were to degenerate to a means of exploiting the young and procuring cheap labour, and on occasions one should be wary of certain temptations and deviations.

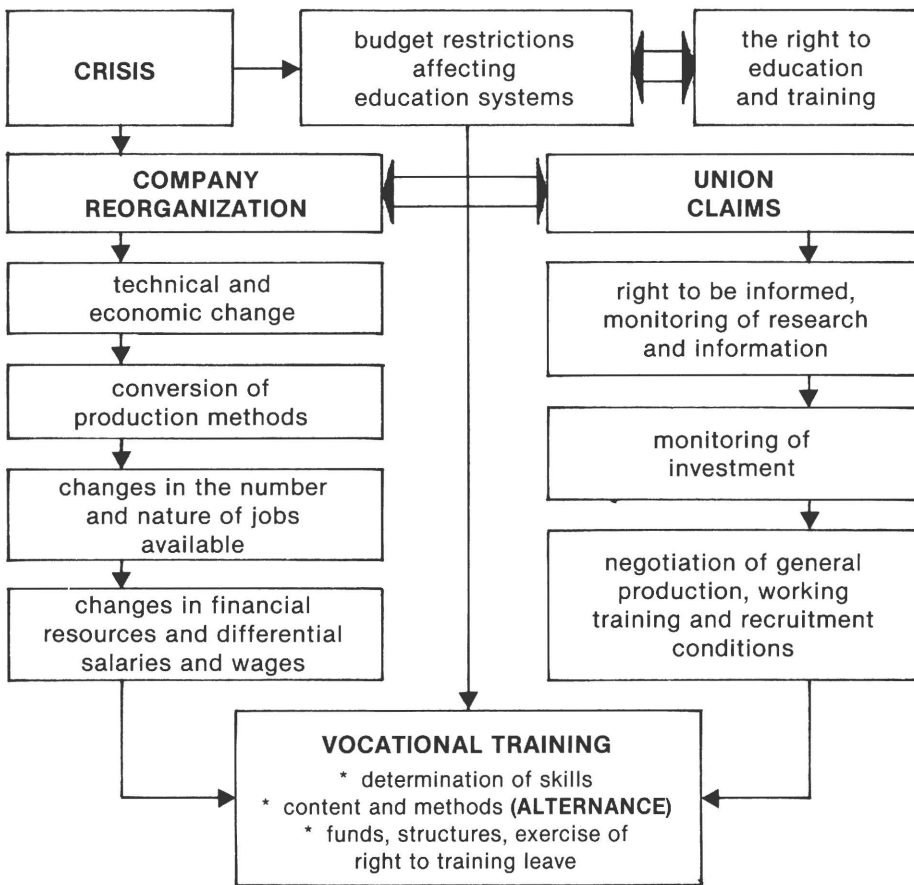


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## Warning! Class struggle

Alternance training is not a neutral tool. This solution does not reconcile the social antagonism associated with training in industrial society – an antagonism that will be aggravated in post-industrial society.

In considering the social and economic objectives of alternance training, one fundamental factor must be taken as the starting point: vocational training is a focal issue in the debate that rages between the two sides of industry on economic structures, industrial policy, employment and the organization of labour. The diagram that follows shows how these are interlinked.



## Servant or master?

This interdependence is even more apparent when a training method such as alternance is used to supplement the process of educating people for the working world. It may well be a means of promoting interaction between production and training. Such interaction can be expected to provide an opportunity for wage-earners and young trainees to keep abreast of changes in the production system (making them less vulnerable to the risk of unemployment); above all they will be better able to understand the trends and even challenge employers' technological and economic decisions, availing

themselves of their right to be informed and to press their claims.

In our view, the primary objective of alternance training is to further a policy and practice of vocational training, both for school-leavers and for adults, that gives the (future) worker mastery over his working tools, in occupational, social and economic terms. This essential objective is, we feel, too often ignored; it implies that the content of training should be designed to satisfy these needs. It calls for union participation in the planning, monitoring and control of training, especially that part of training which is imparted in the workplace.

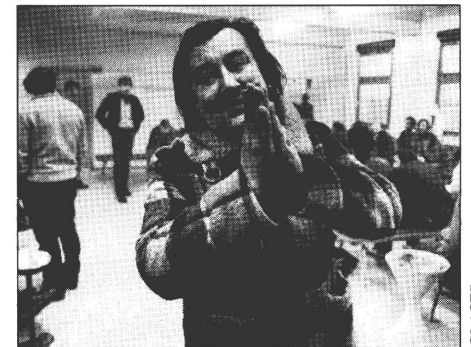
## Reconciling education and life

Alternance training, then, should be seen as more than an educational gimmick. We should reconsider the relationship between the educational system and the world of work. Alternance training also has a cultural and social purpose: to narrow the yawning gap between the general subjects taught in the school and the knowledge in fact required by business and industry. This gap is particularly wide and prejudicial to young people in three fields.

First of all, there is a discrepancy in the field of information and guidance. Educational systems do not help young people to acquire practical, detailed information about different careers, the ways of life they imply, the prospects they offer, the type of training that leads to those careers, etc. Because of this shortcoming, many young people – and girls outnumber boys in this respect – are swayed by prejudice and fashion and are misdirected.

Activities should be arranged to introduce schoolchildren to the working world. Once they have come to the end of their secondary education, they should alternate periods of study with periods of working in a company to help them find out about their own vocational motivations and to open their eyes to the world of work.

There are also wide discrepancies in terms of technical education. When our parents learned how a steam engine or a combustion engine worked they realized that what they were being taught had some connection with the environment in which they lived. Now that technology has become so sophisticated, these links are no longer clear or apparent. All too often, 'new technology' is seen by the young as just a game or a black



Reconciling education and life.

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box. Alternance training is of course no substitute for scientific knowledge, but it may point the way to a different view of the technical world, a functional approach that brings technology within our sphere of understanding.

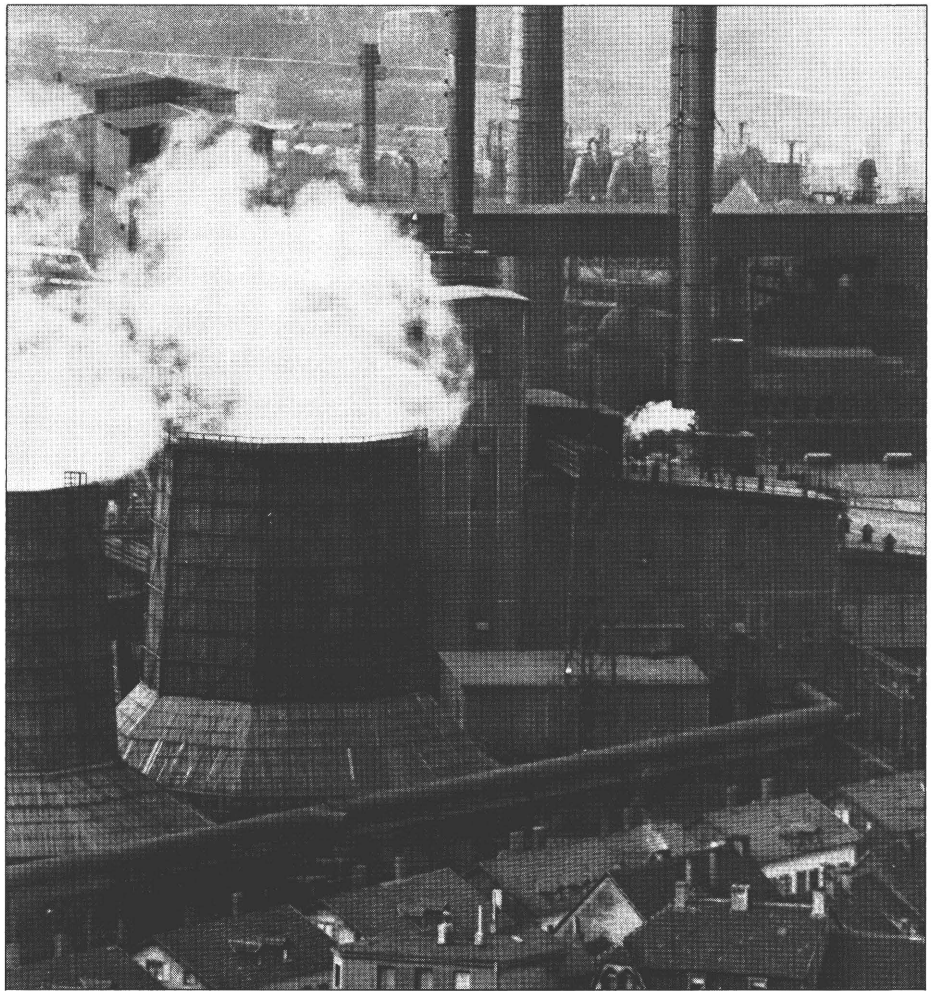
The third discrepancy is perhaps the most worrying. Education does little or nothing to shed light on economics, social issues or communication techniques, all of which greatly influence a worker's life. Few young people are given the opportunity to think about economic life by taking a critical look at concrete facts, and union life is often ignored by the school. Even less does it inform young people about socio-economic ventures such as setting up a small business, forming a cooperative or developing a job-creation project as part of an association, even though such experience might help them to discover alternatives to the mass unemployment to which they are condemned by the crisis in capitalist society. Once again, training schemes that combine the systematic learning of a trade with work in a new type of firm might well enable the young to join in such a venture or devise alternative projects of their own.

### **The school and the employer: the challenge of complementarity**

In the three fields we have discussed, alternance training would be even more useful to teachers and trainers than to pupils, students and apprentices. The idea would probably be pointless if the school and the workplace were to remain two enclosed or even antagonistic worlds, if they mistrusted or cold-shouldered each other, if they saw the relationship between them as one of hierarchical dependence.

In resorting to alternance training, then, we should aim at making the contribution of the school complementary to the experience of work. There is no need to be in a garage to find out how a car engine works; it is better learned in a teaching environment where a whole range of teaching aids is available and the rate of work is not dictated by the need for productivity. On the other hand, working experience should help the young person to mobilize his theoretical and practical knowledge, evaluate what he has learned and discern the needs he has not yet satisfied.

It is also in the workplace that the collective aspects of vocational training can be devel-



*The school and the employer: the challenge of complementarity.*

oped, such as membership of a team and relations with customers. Once these have been assimilated and other skills can be extended, since they will no longer be seen as part of individual performance but as part of collective work.

Alternance can also help to break down one form of rigidity in the traditional vocational training structures. In many trades, training is still highly standardized; the skills imparted are often narrow and bear little relation to what is actually needed on the shop floor. With such training, there is a growing risk that the skills learned will prove to be inappropriate and obsolescent. It has survived only because it leads to the traditional diplomas. Once the school and the workplace start to cooperate, it should be possible to update or replace that training.

### **Which qualifications?**

In the final analysis, could not alternance training be one way of enriching workers' skills? Might not this prospect, which is generally glossed over, in fact be the most promising? The question is all the more important at a time of growing compartmentalization on the labour market. Currently there is a central labour market where skills are sophisticated, jobs stable and pay substantial, where training provides a high standard of skill, and a peripheral market where jobs are short-term, unskilled and fluctuate sharply as companies reorganize, wages are low and there are few opportunities for training.

This divergence makes workers even more dependent on trends in the production

system and exacerbates the contradiction between the general raising of educational and training standards among young people and the shortage of jobs in which their new abilities can be used, with the de-skilling of certain tasks and the rapid change in working methods. Above all, the trend is socially disruptive. Research has shown that in starting up a production process, a choice always has to be made between solutions that put workers' skills to good use and solutions that reinforce the subservience of line to staff workers.

The spearhead of the battle against the impoverishment of skills should be in the workplace, but the campaign may be extended to the training field. To make it effective,

- the vocational competence of young people in a general craft or even in a family of crafts should be broadened, without attempting to prepare them for one specific job; the aim should be greater adaptability;

- technological and practical knowledge should be combined with general, economic and socio-political education.

By interlinking different components of training, the concept of skills will be broadened and made more universal.

In this context, alternance training will help to achieve two basic objectives:

- the coherence and continuity of different components of training;

- the refinement of a broader type of training through the experience of work, facilitating the transition between training and working life.

This obviously implies that training is imparted in a spirit of independence from the authorities who hold the purse strings and that it leads to the qualifications recognized by management/union agreements.

## The underprivileged

The fact remains that the peripheral labour market is the only place to which a growing number of young people, migrants, handicapped, poor and 'second-class citizens' have access. The periods during which they are unemployed are growing longer, adding to their other handicaps such as the loss of previously acquired skills or status and the spread of illiteracy. In a society in which educational systems reproduce and even aggravate inequality and discrimination, the least privileged, for whom school may have been a traumatic experience, shy away from anything that reminds them of this painful past.

The problem in such instances is to devise a type of training which does not concentrate on one small area of skill and which is not merely a response to the short-term needs of industry. In the light of a good deal of first-hand experience, three general conclusions may be drawn:

- Training linked with work experience may be helpful to a young person in overcoming physical, psychological or social handicaps and blockages.

- However, this type of solution is virtually useless or even harmful unless it leads to a stable job and meets some of the young person's aspirations.

- Whereas local ventures have usually proved their worth, in practice national measures have usually been disappointing and unsatisfactory.

## What is the scope for alternance?

In a resolution passed by its General Assembly in February 1982, the Youth Forum of the European Communities recommended 'that all young people who wish to do so should have access to a programme of

alternance training linked with traditional educational structures'. This wording shows both the scope and the limitations of implementing alternance training.

To the extent that alternance strengthens the ties between training and work, it can help to resolve what are regarded as conflicts and break down rigid barriers. It can also enrich both training processes and life in the working environment.

There are certain dangers to be avoided. First of all, alternance should not be the instrument whereby the economic decision-makers gain control over training systems, a very great temptation in the current economic crisis. Things cannot be seen in exactly the same way in all 10 European Community countries in the present socio-political context.

Next, in developing alternance the aim should not be to wind down or dismantle existing training systems; on the contrary, alternance must be used to breathe new life into them, in the light of the objectives we have defined.

Last but not least, the idea is not to make alternance universal by setting it up as the optimum, if not the only, route to the working world. We should not, on the pretext of paving the way for the transition between school and working life, establish a compulsory period during which young people who work for an employer are denied the social, legal and contractual guarantees to which every wage-earner is entitled! It is to avoid this pitfall and at the same time to combat youth unemployment that the Youth Forum is calling for the introduction of a social guarantee for young people.

Alternance is an instrument of change but not a miracle cure. We can only hope that the decision-makers will use it pragmatically and clear-headedly.



# Alternance trainers: educational researchers?

## François Viallet

François Viallet is a mining engineer who is the author of several books and many articles on education and training. He heads a Paris engineering firm, Quaternaire-Education, engaged in research on the development of human resources

The service rendered to the community by vocational training bodies in European countries today is not the same service as they were originally intended to provide. They have been reformed, renovated, reshuffled, expanded or patched up, a symptom of our society's general concern to adapt vocational training systems to the people to be trained, the expectations of the business and industrial sectors benefiting from the service and the socio-economic environment.

Alternance training, a method which some of our countries are just discovering or trying to develop and which others have long practised and are endeavouring to improve, is one solution to that concern; indeed, it appears to be the only possible route along which vocational training can progress.

This article discusses with the people involved in the act of education in an alternance training system or sub-system: directors and instructors in training centres and establishments, trainers and tutors in the companies that train their own personnel, administrators and managers. All these people are lumped together here under the general heading of 'trainers', whether they are in the mainstream of education or come into contact with trainees in a working environment or whether they operate mid-

way between the school and the workplace.

## The major vocational training problem

These trainers are extremely diversified in status, working background and duties, but they have one essential in common: they are grappling with a major, complex and evolving educational problem facing our society, the *transition from school to working life*.

The problem may be universal, but the solution is not. To seek a common solution would be to reduce the problem to a mere abstraction, over-simplify and disregard national and local needs. It is pointless to ask questions such as:

*What qualities should we look for in alternance trainers and how can those qualities be developed?*

*How can we optimize the trainers' careers?*

*What tricks of the trade should they be mastering?*

These questions are pointless because no one answer is valid in every place and on all occasions. Even if an assembly of specialists were to agree on general – and inevitably

vague – replies, what effects could we expect of any scientific consensus in the EEC countries and those parts of their training systems providing alternance training?

## Faced with this problem, trainers have only themselves to rely on

Alternance trainers, it must be admitted, are on their own in tackling the problems they hope to solve through the kind of training they are imparting. In all its varied forms, the aim of alternance training is to relate vocational education more closely to the world of work. Another, perhaps the more important, aim is to reconcile pupils with school education. They are on their own because the problems they have to tackle are often evolving faster than the response from the authorities and research and study institutions. They are alone, for the individual problems with which they are confronted are not the problems that interest the central authorities. They are alone because education is above all a relationship with people. An organization set up by specialists who, however well intentioned, are remote and may facilitate but never take the place of that human relationship.

Wise researchers\* say that no problems exist except as they arise in relation with the people who raise the problems. In other words, an individual finds something problematical only if he does not know which method to use to solve it, whereas other people might know the method. In the case with which we are concerned, the problem has to be serious, for no trainer can say in all certainty what should be done with any given pupils to inspire them with a taste for learning and the ability to use their intelligence and knowledge. In the same way, no trainer can define in all certainty, once and for all, the content, activities and methods of instruction which will help these pupils to make a smooth transition from school to working life. This is the challenge of alternance training, however, and it is to meet the challenge that we are trying to develop alternance or, where it is already firmly established, to make it even more effective.

Alternance trainers are all engaged, sometimes unwittingly, in what might be called a 'research and activity programme', an activity in which the participant has to design and create the facilities, tools and methods he needs to perform the task.

\* I refer in particular to P. Caspar, *Problèmes, méthodes et stratégies de résolution*, Editions d'Organisation, Paris, 1978.

The question to which an answer might usefully be sought, then, is: how can the trainer tackle the job he is doing in a teaching establishment, a job that has to be redefined each day in the light of circumstances?

This is my reply. It can be summed up in one sentence: *a teaching establishment that provides some form of alternance training must have a plan, and its trainers must be resolved to put that plan into practice*. In the discussion that follows I will try to explain this proposal.

### The establishment where trainers work is the place in which they can invest

When we look at organizations and how they react in general to new trends emerging in their environment – in the case of a company it may be the introduction of a new technology, perhaps a new form of association in the case of an authority, or pupils' changing lifestyle in the case of a school – we find five characteristic responses.

Some organizations might be said to be **resistant** in that they see the environmental pressures as working to their disadvantage. The attitude may take one of several outward forms: one organization may try to

throw out a *cordon sanitaire* to ward off contamination from the ideas and practices it rejects, while another, more self-confident or forced by a higher authority to accept a new practice, will adopt the practice but engineer things so that the results are catastrophic and it can then say 'I told you so'.

Another category of organization takes what we might call the **passive** or lethargic attitude, perhaps burying its head in the sand so as not to see what is going on. It makes no change until it is obliged to do so by law or regulation. If no such obligation is placed upon it, or if the obligation comes too late, the organization disappears or operates in a void.

A third category might be classified as **prudent**, as in the case of an organization that introduces new equipment or methods only after their usefulness and profitability have been tried and tested by others, or only after a higher authority has persuaded it to make the move if it hopes to maintain a foothold in the sector.

Some organizations are **enterprising** or dynamic, systematically seeking to adapt the way they work in the light of the difficulties with which they are confronted. What has gone before determines what exists today. They face up to problems as they arise and, to do this, select and mobilize the facilities at their disposal that will help them to arrive at a solution.

Finally – but these are rare – there are the **innovatory** organizations, characterized by their readiness to explore as yet uncharted paths, accepting all the risks this may entail.

Only in an organization coming under one of the three latter headings can alternance training be brought to life. In the others, either no such training exists or, where it does exist, it is derisory or not really alternance training. Leaving these aside, let us consider trainers in the establishments we have dubbed prudent, enterprising or innovatory. They have one thing in common: each in its own way has set itself a goal. The first group has been persuaded of the need for alternance training by outside pressure. The second looks on any malfunction in an establishment as only natural, not an occurrence to be avoided at all costs; one of the objectives it will have set itself will be to strive constantly to reduce such malfunctions. The third will have chosen its vocation: broaching new ground in the field of vocational training.



Alternance trainers: educational researchers.



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*Transition from school to working life.*

In outline, an establishment that has set itself a goal is one that is trying to take the lead in its own specialist or geographical area. Its view is the opposite to the bureaucratic idea that the good institution is the institution that has no problems to solve.

Let us return to these two characteristics. A goal can obviously be achieved only with the consensus of individuals. But how can that consensus be obtained unless an ambitious challenge has been set? This is what I mean when I talk about 'taking the lead'. In one alternance system, the goal may be to ensure that every trainee discovers his or her own form of intelligence and wins respect for that intelligence. In another, the goal may be stated in terms of exam pass rates or success in finding a job. Elsewhere, the goal will be to create close ties between the school and the surrounding community and world of work, or perhaps to devise a method of teaching maths that does not automatically rule out more than 5% of the pupils, etc.

Having done this, the goal must be translated into a *plan of action* (what to do and what order to do it in) and a *programme of action* (who does what and when).

At this stage, the trainers will realize that they have embarked on an action and research process, that they will be encountering many unforeseen difficulties in the course of that process and have a good deal of work if they are to overcome them, that they cannot work in a vacuum if they hope

to attain the goals; above all they will realize that the two main groups involved, teachers in the school and instructors in the workplace, will have to work as a team to find solutions to the learning problems they have opted to tackle.

**It will be these 'mini-educational research units' – in practice, if not in title – that will be the instigators of progress in vocational training in the years to come.**

Despite the generally held idea, research (the source of progress) is not a matter for experts, at least in the field of training. Whether one likes it or not, what goes on in the classroom is determined almost solely by the people who teach. The fruits of educational research are used by researchers themselves. If a decision to innovate is conceived solely by the authorities or by the superstructure it will be stillborn. Things tend to be ordered differently in the industrial field: when robots, automation or electronic machines make their appearance in industry, the people at the top rapidly arrive at decisions and the people on the shop floor have to carry them out, however reluctantly. *In the educational field, the innovations that come to life are those generated by the practitioners, although admittedly the practitioners sometimes draw on research findings.*

Alternance trainers are no exception, but they suffer from an additional handicap in

that research on the process of learning in the field of vocational training is still in its infancy. There is, it is true, no shortage of advice: teachers from the technical schools who work in alternance training should have on-the-job training themselves; instructors responsible for practical work on the shop floor should be trained in teaching methods and sociology; advisers or administrators in those systems should learn to be equally at home in the school and in the workplace. As J. P. Jallade has so clearly shown in the research commissioned by Cedefop in 1982\*, it is a vital prerequisite that these three should be resolved to work together as a triumvirate for the good of the pupils and trainees for whom they are responsible. Without this cooperation – we call it 'project work' when applied to training establishments and 'action and research' when applied to trainers – it would be a waste of effort to embark upon the training of trainers.

Let us now look at what it means to the people in charge of the establishments that provide alternance training.

Why should we take this specific group? Because they are the people who, under certain conditions, can decide to *manage by goal-setting* in the establishments under their charge.

## **The role of alternance training establishment management**

In the 1950s, the organization of labour was defined as good if it separated line, administrative and staff work. It was the growth of economically advanced societies that made this need seem evident. It was called the rationalization of labour. In fact, the concept bore its fruit. During the 1960s, however, the concept started to become counter-productive in social systems. It was noted that 'scientific' work organization left little scope for progress in performance, that individuals were pressing for more social recognition and a say in decisions affecting them. It was then that the concept of human relationships developed. Meetings and discussions in the workplace became more common, and adult training and education were seen as making a vital contribution to the smooth running of institutions. By these means, organizations retained or increased their effectiveness.

\* Young people's alternance training: principles of action, Cedefop, 1982.

The 1970s were the years of plenty in our countries. Institutions allayed dissatisfaction by offering more money. Considerable advances were made as electronics engendered new technologies and trade spread worldwide. The content of many people's work changed and no great resistance was offered because most of them were benefitting simultaneously from the economic benefits and from growth.

Today, in the 1980s, one question being asked is 'how can the energy of individuals be mobilized to prolong this development?' With far higher standards of training and the decline in economic growth which has removed one essential factor that previously made institutions more flexible, there are fewer advocates of the scientific organization of people's need to communicate.

For their part, training systems went through the same process and, in common with other organizations, are today faced by a risk of breakdown. To avoid such a breakdown, one idea linked with the 'goal-setting' concept – and it may leave its imprint on the schools of this decade – is being explored in almost every quarter. Let me explain.

The person in charge of alternance training has to deal – perhaps at one and the same time – with pupils having little motivation

to learn or take up a career and with employers who will pick out the trainees they see as having most potential, condemning the others to unemployment. He is aware that he cannot, in the foreseeable future, expect any more help or facilities from above or any significant change in the economic environment. His only untapped resource is the energy of the trainers in the system under his control. The question facing him, then, is *how to mobilize that energy*.

If a training system, in the person of the head of the training establishment in this instance, defines, the trainer's job for him, what it entails and how it is organized, at best the trainer will deploy only as much of his energy as he feels he need muster to meet the demands made of him by his head and the authority in general. If, on the other hand, the system recognizes that the trainer can define his own task and exercise real control over it, without in any way relinquishing his responsibility for the consequences, good or bad, of exercising that control, the head will find it the only way of releasing the untapped energy. This is the value of the concept of 'goal-setting' in the training centre or unit. It channels the untapped energy which might cause the institution to disintegrate if it were allowed to flow out in all directions at once.

An alternance training establishment, as we have seen, cannot operate like a cog in a large administrative machine. It will not work if it is seen merely as a department carrying out orders relayed from above, the powers-that-be who may have decreed alternance to be the solution to the occupational training problems of the moment and defined hard-and-fast methods for its application. The only way such an establishment can operate is as part of a broadly decentralized system in which the authorities genuinely delegate power to the heads of establishments. It is then up to each head to act. After the customary consultation, he should submit an outline plan to the trainers inside and outside the establishment, stating general goals. He should then ask his trainers to translate those goals into projects and programmes. In such a structure, where the trainers both originate and implement their own projects, they will of their own volition arrive at solutions to the difficulties of vocational training in the 1980s.

In practice, any effort to promote training should be directed towards the heads of establishments, since they are the people who will be responsible for drawing up a plan and bringing it to life. Equally they have the power to reduce alternance training to yet another routine if they are afraid of leading their establishment towards an atmosphere of uncertainty.



# Why alternance training?

**What are the advantages of alternance training and how can it be used to the best advantage?**

*Dr Ron Johnson*

Dr Ron Johnson, manpower consultant

Within the Member States of the European Community there is currently a lot of discussion about 'alternance training', i.e. programmes where periods of off-the-job learning are interspersed with periods of activity in the workplace. It is valuable to reflect on the reasons for promoting programmes of this type, and to discuss ways in which this approach can be used to maximum advantage.

## The problem

'Young people do not seem to be adequately prepared to enter the complex world of today, or to face the challenges that lie ahead.' Statements like this can be heard frequently in various countries. Such comments are critical of the education and training currently provided, and unfortunately much of this criticism is negative and destructive. The changes that are taking place in our society and in the world of work are profound and it is not surprising to find that our existing education and training systems need to be reviewed, and in many areas, revised.

The problem is not, moreover, confined to young people. Adults need education and training as an ongoing provision more than ever before. Considerable changes will have to take place if these needs are to be met. The rigid separation between working and learning which characterizes some of our current provisions must be broken down to give way to flexible arrangements where

people – young and old – can get the help they need to make progress in their own learning and development.

The idea of 'alternance training' is not new, but under the pressure of current events it is being examined afresh and ways are being sought to promote programmes which have clear aims, flexible arrangements and curricula which meet people's learning needs.

## Origins of alternance

Alternance programmes can arise in three quite different ways. Arrangements where off-the-job learning alternates with work can arise from a desire to provide:

- some education or training off-the-job for those who are in employment;
- some work experience for people engaged in education or training programmes;
- a programme where learning can take place both on and off the job in a planned way, making best use of the variety of learning environments and opportunities.

It follows that the answer to the question 'Why alternance training?' may well be different according to the circumstances. In all three cases, however, there is one common thread – the learning needs of the individuals involved, and the recognition that these can best be met – perhaps can only be met – by a programme which includes both on- and off-the-job elements.

## Education for the employed

There are a multitude of examples where education and training opportunities have been provided on a part-time basis for people who are in employment. 'Ragged schools' or 'Sunday schools' were started up over a century ago in Great Britain to provide education for the young children who worked in the factories. In most European countries evening classes for adults have been developed for those who wish to study, but who cannot do so during normal working hours.

When individuals take the initiative to study part-time in vocational subjects, this may arise either from a desire to improve their prospects for employment or advancement, or it may be purely out of interest in the subject-matter. In either case it is clearly important to offer to such people programmes that appeal to them in terms of the subject-matter, and are conducted in ways which enable them to learn. Studying part-time in addition to the daily round of employment is not easy.

Correspondence courses based on written material have been augmented in recent years by other learning aids (radio, television, telephone conferencing and cable-linked television classes, audio tapes, video tapes, computer-assisted learning, etc.) for those who are unable to attend classes in the normal way. In developing these ideas further it will be important to distinguish between distance learning

(where the teacher and the learner do not often meet) and open learning.

In the past some of these learning opportunities have been initiated by philanthropists or by commercially-minded training specialists, but the largest provision has been made by governments who recognize both the social and economic importance of a well-educated population. In most countries, however, the growth of such provisions has been sporadic and patchy, responding to apparent demand rather than attempting to determine needs in any systematic way.

In many of the opportunities referred to in the preceding paragraphs, the initiative for learning lies with the individual, who often bears a large proportion of the cost. Employers also recognize that the work-force needs training in ways that cannot always be met on the job, and hence many firms have their own training centres, or make other arrangements to give their employees off-the-job instruction where this is considered valuable for the firm. Training for salespeople and supervisors, for example, has received a good deal of attention by commercial organizations.

In most European countries part-time courses are provided for apprentices, and often the employer allows the young people

concerned to attend classes during working hours. This system is particularly well organized in the Federal Republic of Germany, where a high proportion of those young people who leave full-time education at 15 years of age become apprentices. In other countries, notably in the United Kingdom, many of the young people who left school in the 1970s were either unemployed or entered full-time employment where they received very little training or education. In many countries young people who leave school do not want to return to the classroom, so that attempts to persuade them to continue in full-time education or training are likely to meet with little success.

Alternance programmes may well provide a solution to the problem for many of these young people, since the opportunity to become involved in useful work is highly motivating for them, and this motivation can be carried through into the off-the-job situation provided care is taken to ensure that the various elements of the scheme fit together and make sense to the young people concerned. This is particularly true for the young people who have not been successful at school. If training programmes are to be successful, it is vital to motivate the young people to participate and to learn.

## Work experience during education

In several European countries arrangements have been made for children to visit industrial or commercial workplaces during the last year or two of compulsory full-time education. In some cases these arrangements have included the opportunity for youngsters to spend a week or two working in a company. This has generally been viewed as a valuable part of the careers education, helping to give young people a feel for different kinds of jobs and working environments, giving them a learning experience which cannot be provided in a classroom.

In many full-time courses at first degree and at technician level arrangements are now made for the students to spend periods in employment. In these so-called sandwich courses students may spend six months or a year at a time with an employer in the second or third year. Many reasons are cited for this practice. The experience is said to enable the students to relate what they have been taught in the university or college more effectively with what is happening in industry or commerce. Such students are said to be able to apply their knowledge more quickly to the requirements of their employers once they have completed the course, and this is often reflected in the higher salaries offered to sandwich-course graduates in relation to the graduates from ordinary full-time courses.

An incidental, but very valuable, spin-off from the sandwich-course pattern is the close collaboration that takes place between the lecturers in the educational institution and senior managers in the companies which take the students during their industrial periods. Often some investigatory work of value to the company is undertaken by the students, with college staff involved in an advisory capacity. Apart from enhancing the students' learning, this helps college staff to keep up to date in their subjects, to appreciate some of the problems of industry, and to contribute their expertise to the benefit of the firm.

Perhaps the most important factor of all is what the students can learn in the firms. It is not possible to state generalizations which will be true in every case, but there are a number of lessons which can best be learned in the industrial or commercial workplace. Some of these lessons are concerned more with attitude and understanding than with



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knowledge and skills, although these are included.

Other reasons for students spending time in industry include opportunities:

- *to be involved with mass-production*, with all the problems of large, fast through-put, the immediacy of quality control, the consequences of machine break-down, etc.;

- *to see at first hand how the different functions of a firm fit together*, e.g. the marketing, production, management, information and control systems, distribution and sales, customer relations;

- *to recognize that quality control and quality of workmanship* are an integral part of any well-run operation and vital to effective sales;

- *to appreciate the importance of time-keeping*, discipline and team-work in a situation where the success of the enterprise depends on each person playing his part and working effectively with others.

Although these matters can be discussed away from the workplace, they cannot be fully appreciated except by being involved in a commercial operation, by being an actor on the stage rather than a spectator.

Perhaps the most telling reason of all is that once the realities of commercial life are appreciated, the students are more highly motivated to study the subject-matter of the educational course with greater dedication and interest. This pre-supposes that the course is indeed relevant, and presented in such a way that the student can recognize this.

If a course is specifically designed for the public sector, then periods spent working in the public service may well give similar, but not identical benefits to those mentioned above.

## Planned alternance

The two approaches discussed above start from either employment or full-time education. Increasingly the tendency is to design programmes which from the outset try to make the best use of various learning situations – both on and off-the-job. There is widespread re-discovery of the great power and value of coaching, where one person helps another to learn, often during the actual course of work. In the best-run factories, offices and laboratories this happens anyway. But being more aware of the



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activity enables people to make greater use of day-to-day experiences for learning both individually and from others.

Currently there is a great deal of emphasis on self-development and on coaching in discussions about management development, and these ideas can be applied to all grades of employees. People develop attitudes, knowledge and skills in all kinds of situations, and the aim should be to help them to be aware of this and to regard off-the-job learning as merely a part of this ongoing process. In the past the tendency has been to regard what happens off-the-job as the beginning and end of learning, rather than as just a different kind of learning opportunity.

The word alternance has been particularly applied to the development of new training programmes for young people and the remainder of this article will be concerned with that aspect of the subject.

## Young people as clients

High unemployment in Europe has focused attention on the 16-19 age group, and highlighted the need to improve initial training for these young people, many of whom are now unable to get jobs. Schemes were specially introduced to deal with the large

numbers of unemployed young people in the various Member States during the mid-1970s. These schemes were thought of as temporary expedients, but they are rapidly becoming a permanent feature of the education and training system.

As temporary programmes they may be satisfactory, but as permanent provisions they may well need to be re-designed. The concept of alternance, sensibly applied, is likely to become one of the vital factors in this re-design. In Great Britain, the Youth Training Scheme currently being launched is firmly based on the notion of alternance – a one-year programme where education, training and work experience are consciously brought together in a planned way.

This development has been underpinned by a great deal of research and experimentation. It is now possible to identify what are the key features in a sound 'alternance' programme, i.e. a scheme where:

young people are motivated to learn;

the various parts fit together in a sensible manner;

each young person is helped to take charge of his or her progress and to fulfil his or her potential in constructive and purposeful ways;

the progress of young people is assessed, monitored and recorded to form the basis of



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a final certificate which lists their positive achievements.

Furthermore, we now know how to set up such programmes to meet the needs of a wide variety of young people, including those who can show little, if any, academic attainments. The starting point for the design of such schemes brings us back to our original question – ‘Why alternance training?’ Or perhaps the question should be ‘For whose benefit is this alternance training?’.

In considering any kind of training programme one must first of all ask who is the client. What people are being trained, and for whose benefit? In essence there are three key groups of people with a vital interest in vocational training programmes – the individuals who are trained, the people who employ them, and society at large. In considering programmes, therefore, it is important to take into account the legitimate concerns of all three groups. Generally speaking it is worthwhile making sure that in addition to the education and training experts who organize and teach on courses,

representatives of the three key groups are involved in the design of vocational education and training programmes.

It is by no means certain that on completing their training the young people will be able to get jobs at all, let alone at the firm where they were trained or in the occupation they have learned. In these circumstances it must be the young people themselves who are regarded as the primary client in these programmes. If this is accepted, it becomes a great deal easier to decide what training to provide.

The uncertainty in the labour market means that young people must be trained to be flexible, that is:

able to offer themselves for a range of jobs,

able to survive, if need be, periods of unemployment,

and in some cases at least, able to set up enterprises themselves and to become self-employed.

Although young people are often talked about as a group, they differ widely in ability and interests. Thus each programme

should enable young people to discover themselves, their own personal interests and their abilities. A given programme is unlikely to be able to cope with a very wide range of abilities and interests, so that some pre-selection of the young people who will join it is evidently required. There must, however, be a mechanism to ensure that the opportunities for training in a locality are such that there is a suitable place for virtually every youngster who lives there. This is an important and a new starting point for creating training programmes.

### **Setting up alternance programmes**

If we assume that an organization or a group of organizations has decided to provide an alternance training programme for some young people, the first step is to appoint a suitable person to set up and manage the programme. This is not the kind of thing that can be done in someone’s spare time, as an adjunct to some other job. If

necessary the person can be initially seconded from one of the participating organizations to get things moving. The next step is to identify what kind of youngsters the scheme is to be designed for and what kinds of skills can be taught using the available resources.

The role and place of this scheme organizer is crucial. The person appointed must be competent, and be given clear lines of responsibility and authority. If a group of organizations is involved, a small management committee must be appointed to oversee the work. The scheme organizer must then set about gaining the commitment of the various parties involved in the firms, in the colleges and in the training centres. The scheme's aims and objectives, resources and finances must be defined, but not in a rigid way.

Once the scheme is running the organizer must have the time to visit the young people in the various phases of the programme to ensure that they are receiving the agreed education, training or work experience as the case may be. Only in this way can the coherence of the programme be maintained. In many cases the local scheme will be working within a nationally agreed framework where the contribution of each part of the programme is defined (e.g. in terms of the education syllabus, the practical skills and the work experience to be covered). Even here, however, there will be a tendency for the programme to get out of phase if this coordinating role is not undertaken. This level of coordination may be less necessary for the more academic schemes, e.g. for technicians, but in the majority of schemes it will be essential.

The next step is to organize the resources and to select those who will help the young

people to learn. These helpers will include teachers in educational establishments, instructors in training centres, supervisors in the workplace (who will give on-the-job instruction and guidance), and those who will counsel the young people.

To perform each of these roles successfully, the teachers, trainers, supervisors and counsellors must have three qualities:

- the ability to do their own jobs well;
- a liking for young people;
- the ability to relate to young people.

Some commentators emphasize the need for teaching skills. Care is needed, however, because in the past the emphasis in both education and training has been in imparting pre-determined knowledge and skills through exposition and practice. In dealing with young people today, however, especially those who are academically less able, discovery learning and discussion must play a very large part. Teachers and trainers need to become resources, helping young people to learn what they want to learn, and not always what the teacher wants to teach. Some teachers and instructors find this approach harder to achieve than do factory supervisors.

### **Organization and funding for alternance**

As noted previously, it is far too simple to say that training is provided for the benefit of the people being trained. Surely doctors and nurses are trained for the benefit of their patients – and that will doubtless include you and I at some stage. Food

scientists are trained to work in industry, and they control the quality and safety of much of the food we eat. The quality of their training is of concern to us all. The same kind of considerations apply to most jobs people do in modern society.

In seeking to minimize their responsibilities, governments have often said that vocational training is for the benefit of the employer and that employers should pay for the training of their employees. Again this analysis is unsound for at least two reasons. To begin with, once an employer has provided the training, there is often nothing to stop the individual concerned moving to another employer.

In view of this the 'training' employer may regard such investment in manpower as of doubtful value to the enterprise. Secondly, the employer may be tempted, in these circumstances, to provide only the barest minimum of training to meet his immediate needs, rather than provide a full training which can form the basis of further learning and development.

Attitudes to this vary in the Member States, and where there is a commitment on the part of employers to collaborate in ensuring an adequate supply of trained manpower, these problems are less acute. However, they are likely to become more pressing as the high rate of unemployment persists throughout the Community over the next few years.

This means that Member States, with the help of the Commission of the European Communities and technical support from Cedefop, need to ensure that steps are taken to provide alternance training for all the young people who leave school at the minimum age, and that the costs are fairly shared.



# Alternance training

## The problem of cooperation between firms and schools as places of learning

*Joachim Münch*

Dr Joachim Münch, a full professor at the University of Kaiserslautern, is engaged in teaching and research in the field of vocational training. His interest and research activities focus on alternance training, adult vocational training, vocational training policy and the financing of vocational training

The form alternance training takes, its potential and its limits depend to a not insignificant extent on the prevailing political, legal/institutional and socio-cultural conditions, and these vary from one Member State of the Community to another, in some respects quite substantially<sup>1</sup>. The following therefore attempts to describe and illustrate the problems connected with cooperation between firms and schools as places of learning and to propose solutions in general terms, i.e. without reference to the the circumstances in any one Member State. It goes without saying that the Community countries all subscribe to the principles of pluralism in politics and society and of the market economy.

### The principle underlying alternance training: the plurality of places of learning<sup>2</sup>

By alternance training<sup>3</sup> we generally mean learning at different places with the object of optimizing skills. The assumption is – and it is confirmed by experience – that certain learning goals, abilities or individual skills are better or (less frequently) can only be taught and acquired at one place of learning (e.g. a sense of responsibility for high-quality work: on the job), while other goals and skills are best left to another place of learning (e.g. schools for technical drawing). It has become generally accepted that, under the conditions in which work is

performed today, schools are, of course, indispensable for vocational training, but that, depending on the occupation, required level of skills, target group and specific objective of vocational training, varying degrees of learning and combinations of places of learning outside the schools, particularly firms<sup>4</sup>, are equally essential.

It is impossible to lay down binding criteria that are 'right' for all areas and levels of training. Nor would this serve a useful purpose, mainly because, as a careful analysis of present-day training reveals, the range of places of learning extends well beyond the basic pattern of 'out-of-school plus in-school'. Thus alternance training usually signifies not only the alternating attendance of two places of learning, but very often a configuration of more than two such places, with learning organized and functioning on a time-sharing and sequence basis. In other words, it is not duality of places of learning that determines the organizational model of vocational training but plurality. However, the involvement of various places of learning in the learning and training process does not in itself signify plurality of places of learning as a measure of optimization. What is needed is purposeful and regulated cooperation among places of learning and those who work in them. This raises the following problems:

- the problem of gaining acceptance for a place of learning;
- the problem of selecting and structuring places of learning;

■ the problem of combining places of learning;

■ the problem of coordination and cooperation.

### The problem of gaining acceptance for a place of learning

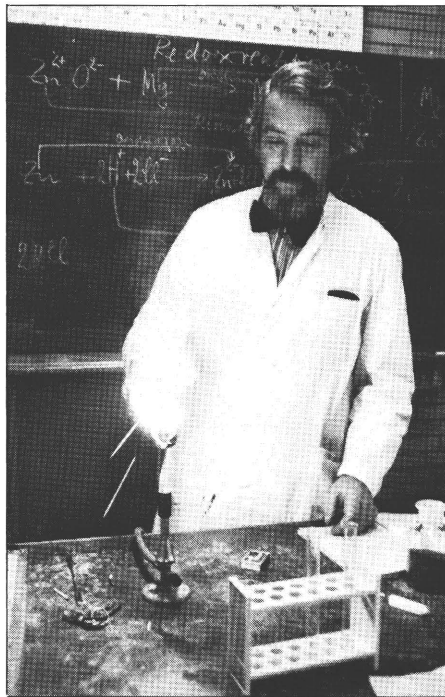
If cooperation among various places of learning is to be pedagogically fruitful, a basic requirement is that each should recognize the others as being necessary and important in the achievement of a given objective (e.g. attaining skilled worker status) of vocational training. This is not so self-evident as it might seem. Some, but by no means all, vocational school teachers, for example, tend to underestimate the potential and importance of learning on the job or in a similar environment. Conversely, company trainers not infrequently criticize the actual or supposed impractical nature of teaching in vocational schools: what the schools teach, these critics claim, is partly superfluous and partly obsolete. Some acceptance problems, often no more than subliminal in effect, are also the product of differences in the image of vocational training and in professional self-images (e.g. the teacher versus the expert). Differences in the legal and institutional background to places of learning (e.g. State school versus privately owned company) and in the experience and training of the teachers/trainers (e.g. university

teacher training versus training to skilled-worker level followed by practical experience) may also contribute to a lack of mutual acceptance of places of learning.

The problem cannot be solved by trying to do away with the specific nature of the staff at the various places of learning, even supposing this was possible, since it would at least partly threaten the productive peculiarities of the different facets of the pluralist combination of places of learning. It is therefore essential to improve and perpetuate mutual acceptance with a constant flow of information of interest to all places of learning and with intensive interaction, with the emphasis consciously placed on the task to be performed jointly by all those involved in vocational training. This acceptance could and should ultimately lead to a situation in which the plurality of places of learning, with all its implications for teachers and trainers, is a significant, self-evident factor determining the nature of vocational teaching at all times.

### The problem of selecting and structuring places of learning

As places which can be distinguished not only by their location but also by their atmosphere (a working or learning environment), functions, organization and legal/institutional form, places of learning do not simply exist, easy to find and to describe. They are born of normative thinking, which in turn is the outcome of a very wide range of experience and opinions. The design and development of the industrial training workshop, for instance, stemmed from the realization that not all jobs in industry are likely to teach a man the depth and range of skills he requires. Resorting to or adding other places of learning is a means of achieving the plurality of places of learning with a view to ensuring that the target group (young people undergoing initial training, adults in in-service training, etc.) learn the required skills in as optimal a fashion as possible. The conscious and purposeful development and variation of typical forms of places of learning to optimize vocational training is not only not excluded: it is often an essential precondition. Thus jobs in which a process of learning under guidance takes place without any particular thought having been given to the matter may well in principle meet the requirements of pedagogical



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ical functionality. Whether this is enough to make a major or at least an adequate contribution to the achievement of the goal of vocational qualification must be considered in each individual case, although this is not always done by any means. The alternative or complement is either one or more of the wide range of other places of learning (simulators, training workshops, schools, etc.) or jobs in which the emphasis is intentionally placed on the pedagogical aspect. Such jobs may be selected for their pedagogical content (where they exist) or organized to give them this content (e.g. the workload is geared to training needs). Similar solutions are found in vocational schools as places of learning, which are in certain respects the diametric opposite of jobs (firms) as places of learning as regards pedagogical potential and limits. Where schools see their remoteness from working life and its practical requirements as a shortcoming, they endeavour to create job-like or similar learning conditions in the shape of school workshops. However, a closer look at the workshops to be found in schools reveals that they differ in their didactic function, in some respects quite considerably. Some are used to teach occupational skills and practical experience and so compete with on-the-job training and the firm as a place of learning. Others complement on-the-job training. Yet others function as demonstration workshops or technical laboratories or are designed to enable

pupils to gain their first experience of work (under guidance), serving as a bridge between off-the-job learning and the practical requirements of working life.

Similar observations could be made about training workshops run by individual firms or groups of firms. There is thus a wide range of configurations and combinations of possible places of learning, signifying a great opportunity for improving vocational training and necessitating the closest possible coordination and cooperation among places of learning.

### The link between combinations of places of learning and training results

It is not possible to make a generally valid statement on the suitability and appropriateness of combinations of places of learning and, in this specific context, the way in which time is shared among the places of learning involved in a training course or the process of teaching skills (e.g. firm – training workshop – school). This will vary as a function of the pedagogical goal (e.g. basic or specialized training), the nature of the occupation and occupational skills (e.g. those of a fitter, bank clerk, technician or engineer) and the nature of the target group (e.g. young people with a high or low level of education, or adults). At least, this is how it should be. However, there are as yet very few scientifically tried decision-making aids, research into places of learning still being in its infancy. The following describes – very briefly – the findings of a study by the author of the training of apprentices as one variation of alternance training<sup>5</sup>.

It must first be pointed out that the study was confined to vocational training in firms – the places of learning being the job itself, the training workshop and instruction within the firm – and concerned training to skilled-worker level in seven occupations (optician, bookseller, printer, electrical equipment installer, specialist in the electronics of energy-generating equipment, clerk in industry and mechanic).

The output quality, meaning the result achieved with the training, was defined as a multidimensional structure comprising five skill dimensions, namely examination-related, occupation-related, firm-related and democracy-related aptitude and aptitude

for continuing education and training. Examination-related aptitude is a reflection of the results achieved by apprentices in examinations before a chamber of trade, industry, etc. and of their performance as attested by the vocational school<sup>6</sup> in the final certificate. While firm-related aptitude is a reference to the apprentice's technical skills and performance in his own firm, occupation-related aptitude is a measure of the performance that can be expected of him in firms of different sizes and in different sectors and also in selected activities specific to certain occupations and not therefore confined to one firm. Democracy-related aptitude is an expression of the extent to which the apprentice is able and willing to adopt democratic principles and attitudes in his occupation and employment, while aptitude for continuing education and training measures his ability and willingness to undertake further training.

In all the occupations covered by the study there are firms which use not only the job itself but also a training workshop and in-firm instruction as places of learning. As the vocational school must also be regarded as an important place of learning, it can be said that the dominant principle in the organization of alternance training is the plurality of places of learning.

Despite the many combinations of places of learning to be found in on-the-job vocational training, each of the occupations studied has typical combinations (structural types) as regards the nature of these places and the time spent at each. The structures discovered differ from one occupation to another, in some respects very considerably. None the less, the results achieved in training in the occupations studied do not reveal any major differences among the occupations. This means that a given structure of places of learning is not necessarily an advantage or disadvantage for training in every occupation or, more generally, every qualification.

Within a given occupation, on the other hand, differences in the structure of places of learning do produce different training results. Furthermore, there are outputs specific to places of learning in terms of the results achieved in training. For example, the job as a place of learning is particularly suited to improving firm-related aptitude. On the other hand, the findings of the study indicate that the training workshop is most likely to improve examination-related and

democracy-related aptitude and aptitude for continuing education and training.

In view of the special importance they may have, reference is also made to the following findings. Some evidence was found of both under-investment and over-investment in terms of time spent at the various places of learning and the training results aspired to. Thus a very short time spent at one place of learning (e.g. a total of only 14 days at a group training workshop) produced poorer training results than when this place of learning was waived altogether (under-investment!). Suffice it to say that conclusions ought possibly to be drawn from this finding for the 'group training workshop' as a place of learning.

On the other hand, it became clear that increasing the time spent at a place of learning beyond a certain limit does not lead to a corresponding improvement in training results: in fact, better results are achieved where less time is spent at the place of learning concerned (over-investment!).

The findings of the study confirm neither the view that school is the place for vocational training nor the claim that with on-the-job training or training as close as possible to the eventual place of employment all the problems will solve themselves. They do indicate, however, that carefully organized and planned alternance training can substantially improve vocational training.

## The problem of coordination and cooperation<sup>7</sup>

Alternance training cannot be fully effective pedagogically unless the various places of learning concerned are not simply juxtaposed in some form of loose relationship but genuinely work together. If this is to be achieved, special measures and efforts to bring about systematic coordination and close cooperation are usually needed. The forms this coordination and cooperation take, their potential and limits depend on legal, institutional, staffing and local factors, which vary considerably, and this not only from one country to another. They cannot and will not be discussed here in detail.

By and large, 'coordination' specifically means prior agreement on the content of learning usually in the form of curricula (for training and instruction). 'Cooperation', on the other hand, signifies collaboration among teachers and trainers as learning and training proceed. The following attempts to illustrate – again taking the training of apprentices as an example – the fundamental differences between coordination and cooperation and the main features of each in the context of the pluralist combination of places of learning and thus of alternance training.

### Coordination

The goals and subject areas allotted to the various places of learning concerned should





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be coordinated at least at macro-didactic level, i.e. at the level of general goals and general subject areas, and possibly introduced as quite distinct and yet interdependent modules. It is doubtful whether micro-didactic coordination (coordination of subject areas at the level of accurately defined goals) is possible, necessary or worthwhile. Teaching and learning are processes which, unlike industrial production processes, for example, do not follow a strictly technical or rational course. People involved in a learning process have changing moods, motivations, reactions and attitudes. This imposes natural limits on the ability to plan and implement in great (didactic) detail. Furthermore, even quite trivial factors – perhaps the fact that training or instruction periods cannot take place at one or other place of learning – may be enough to jeopardize too refined a system of coordination.

The coordination of theory and practice is a particular aspect of the coordination problem. Difficulties arise from the fact that a strict division in the allocation of practical

and theoretical subject areas to cooperating places of learning (e.g. a firm and a school) is impossible and would in any case be unwise in some respects. A clear line can, moreover, be drawn between occupational practice and occupational theory only with qualifications. Occupational practice always involves theory, and theory and its teaching are always attuned, to a greater or lesser extent, to practice. Added to this, occupational practice and, therefore, occupational theory and their relationship differ from one occupation to another. We need only consider commercial and administrative occupations and technical occupations in industry to see how true this is.

### Cooperation

A general distinction can be made between the following forms of cooperation:

- direct cooperation among teachers and trainers at the places of learning concerned;
- indirect cooperation among teachers, trainers and administrators at a level above

the places of learning (e.g. in committees set up to consider matters of regional and general importance).

While statutory and institutionalized arrangements are usually required for indirect cooperation, as is the case with the vocational training committee set up under the Vocational Training Act in the Federal Republic of Germany, direct cooperation at the level of places of learning is generally informal and covers such activities as:

- visits by teachers and trainers to each other's place of work to familiarize themselves with conditions there;
- exchanges of information on learning conditions at the places of learning, their special features and their limits;
- alignment of basic curricular requirements with specific conditions at places of learning and the progress made by target groups;
- exchanges of pedagogically relevant information on target groups common to both sides;
- exchanges of information on the performance and attitudes of target groups;

■ joint and coordinated pedagogical action.

To conclude, the role and importance of cooperation in alternance training will be illustrated by taking a pilot project in the Federal Republic of Germany as an example. The report on this pilot project states: 'Only when the trainers and teachers had together considered the teaching and training curricula, was it possible to translate the plans into an appropriate form of training that was comprehensible to the target groups because it was related to the practical situation<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> MÜNCH, J.: 'Betriebliche Bildungsarbeit in den EG-Ländern unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland', in *Bildungsarbeit in Unternehmen*, BASF AG, Cologne 1978.

<sup>2</sup> MÜNCH, J.: 'Pluralität der Lernorte – Vorüberlegungen zu einer Theorie', in: J. MÜNCH (ed.), *Lernen – aber wo? Der Lernort als pädagogisches und lernorganisatorisches Problem*, Trier 1977.

<sup>3</sup> *Alternierende Ausbildung für Jugendliche, Leitfaden für Praktiker*, Cedefop, Luxembourg 1982.

<sup>4</sup> MÜNCH, J.: and MOSCHÉ KATH, F., 'Zur Phänomenologie und Theorie des Arbeitsplatzes als Lernort', in: J. MÜNCH (ed.), *Lernen – aber wo? Der Lernort als pädagogisches und lernorganisatorisches Problem*, Trier 1977.

<sup>5</sup> MÜNCH, J., ET AL.: *Interdependenz von Lernort – Kombinationen und Output-Qualitäten betrieblicher Berufsausbildung in ausgewählten Berufen*, Berlin 1981.

MÜNCH, J., ET AL.: 'Organisationsformen betrieblichen Lernens und ihr Einfluß auf Ausbildungsergebnisse', J. Münch (ed.), Berlin 1981 (= *Ausbildung und Fortbildung*, 22).

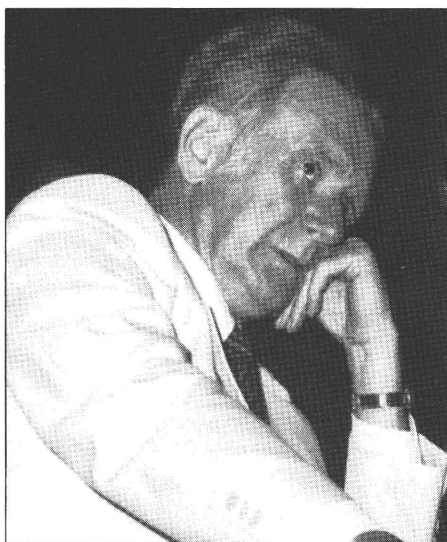
<sup>6</sup> MÜNCH, J.: *Das berufliche Bildungswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Cedefop, Luxembourg 1982.

<sup>7</sup> MÜNCH, J.: 'Kooperation zwischen schulischer und betrieblicher Berufsbildung', in: MÜNCH, J., *Berufsbildung und Berufsbildungsreform in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Bielefeld, 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Pressemeldung des Bundesinstituts für Berufsbildung, *Sammelmeldung* Nr 5, 15 September 1982, p. 2.



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## Matteo Vita

*Interview: D. Guerra*

Matteo Vita is the director of Ancifap (Associazione Nazionale Centri IRI Formazione Addestramento Professionale). This association of IRI vocational training centres is based at Piazza della Repubblica 59, Rome, and has training centres throughout Italy. Most of its training schemes are set up for large industrial concerns

**Q.** 'Alternance training' has been widely discussed in Europe. What is alternance?

**A.** Alternance: in my view it has always existed and yet it is as if we had not yet discovered its full potential. Our German training colleagues may be right in saying it has always existed in their 'dual' system, but I still harbour the idea that even they have something more to discover.

Assuming that alternance is the combination of two complementary ways of learning by the alternation of work and study, the first point to be made is the risk of undervaluing the benefits it can offer. The 'dualists' are only a step or two ahead, but in common with the traditional 'separatists' they run the risk of debating alternance, as has been the case in the past few years, without looking for the fresh educational experiences it might provide.

I find it hard to understand the real reasons why alternance should have gained more ready acceptance in vocational training. If the principle is sound, why should alternance not be the ideal learning method in any preparation for life and then in experience of life itself?

**Q.** Alternance, then, is a method of learning, not just a way of organizing vocational training?

**A.** I cannot agree that we should mentally pigeonhole alternance as a way of learning. I sustain that every attempt to apply alternance should spring from widely shared cultural conviction, from curiosity, from a spirit of enquiry into everything that might

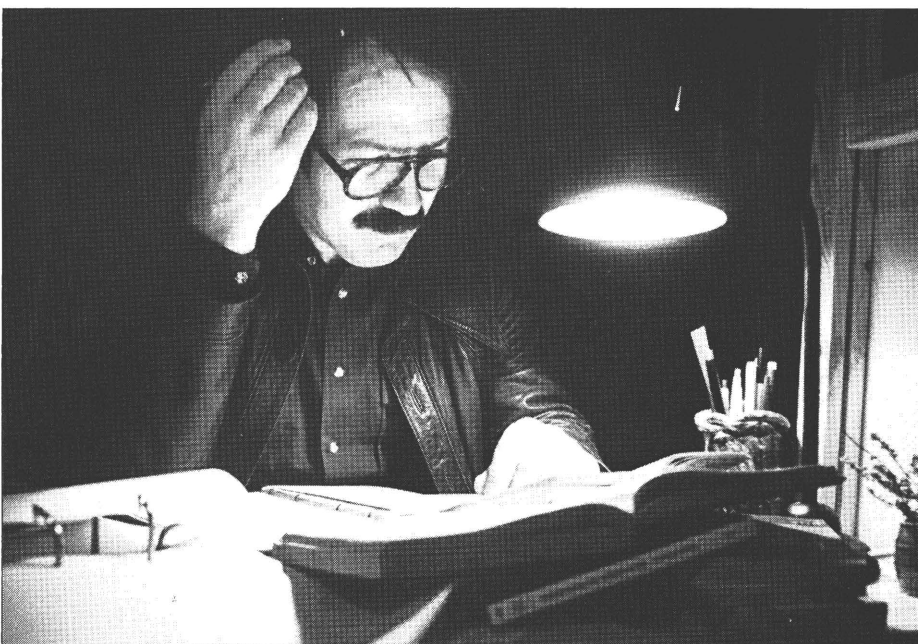
promote the quality of learning. Indeed I am convinced that this is the most effective method of bringing all forms of teaching closer to real life and introducing new opportunities for learning into everyday life.

Let us by all means discuss alternance in connection with vocational training, but let us not restrict it to initial vocational training for the young.

**Q.** Do you not think there might be a risk that, after so much discussion, in the end

alternance will prove to be no more than a rehash of old training formulas?

**A.** That is almost a challenge. In other words, if we succeed in organizing alternance with all the rigour of a research project whose objectives are to relate learning more closely to the training needs of today and above all tomorrow, if we can verify that these objectives have been achieved, we shall have been right to exercise our curiosity and to look for new means.



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Q. How can alternance be achieved, what trainers are needed?

A. Alternance calls for commitment to preparatory work, the consensus of trainers and the people within the workplace and changes to working practices on both sides. The people in the workplace must become 'the promoters of learning', while the learners must be given as much scope as possible for finding out for themselves, for research, for independence.

Inevitably alternance is multidisciplinary, as is the real-life situation in which the learning process takes place. Alternance entails analysis and discovery; it does not follow the pattern traditional in the school, learning by memorizing, nor is it like conventional in-company training. It goes further than the specific, aiming at a far broader level of knowledge and understanding, to include organization and the observation of the environment, relationships and rules of life.

For this reason I would repeat that the condition governing the achievement of truly educational alternance training is that there should be a plan for the training

processes, that they should be organized and that there should be continuity in training and in the move from practical experience to periods of reflection and theoretical discovery, and vice versa.

In both situations, study and work, alternance is a means of recouping those areas of learning that used to be sacrificed in each one.

Q. What are the political and cultural prerequisites for alternance training? What legislation and regulations will be needed?

A. There must be a widely held belief that the binomials of study/work and study/real life should combine to produce a truly integrated method of learning unhampered by semantic differences, diverging educational attitudes or lack of liaison, thus avoiding the unwarranted labour of relating the two aspects after the event.

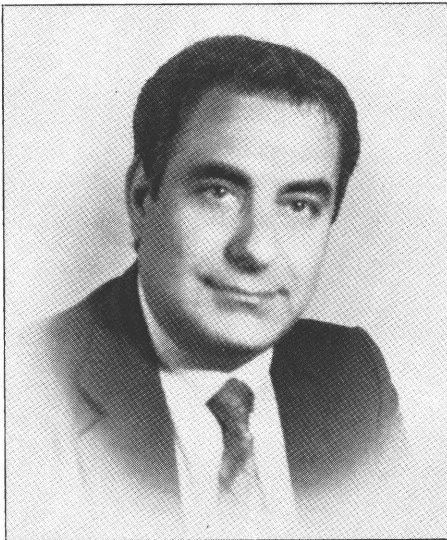
People must discard the received idea that there is a specific age for learning. To learn, one has to confront real-life situations and gradually equip oneself with the knowledge needed. Learning is one of the greatest gifts we can receive, whatever our time of life. People must be convinced that the age of

school or initial training is a 'peculiar' time, a time when learning processes and capacities are initiated. This will change the role of teachers and everyone who is or may become a 'promoter of learning', other people's or his or her own (which is a way of life).

If the legislation and regulations are introduced in this 'cultural climate' of learning, the foundations will be laid for alternance. If in the meanwhile progress is also made towards a wide cultural climate of mobility, with less of today's anxiety and suffering, this will provide fresh support for alternance.

Q. Do you think that alternance will emerge from this experimental phase and become a common method in Europe?

A. I do not feel that the conditions or the prerequisites have yet been satisfied or that the alternance method is likely to be common in the near future, but I believe that in the remaining years of this decade we shall have to fight to advance the idea; its acceptance will come from the conduct, evaluation and dissemination of the many eloquent experiments in alternance.



## Cataldo Di Napoli

*Interview: D. Guerra*

Cataldo Di Napoli is the president of IAL-CISL (Istituto Addestramento Lavoratori), whose headquarters is at Via Tagliamento 39, Rome. IAL works closely with the trades union congress, Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori, and has training centres throughout Italy

**Q.** The crisis affecting established institutions forces us to think about the new. 'Alternance training' has been widely discussed in Europe and the understanding of the term differs from one social setting to another. What is alternance?

**A.** Various concepts of alternance exist, giving rise to a diversity of situations and effects. For the sake of simplicity in discussing alternance, we can group these ideas according to three main definitions, although each group may include a very wide range of actual and potential schemes.

■ The first definition is that alternance is a means of changing the way society is organized today: to replace the model whereby education is concentrated in the early years of our lives by a model of lifelong education. The general view is that this would be hard to achieve in the near or medium-term future, since the prerequisites – above all the availability of economic and cultural resources – are not yet satisfied. In essence it is seen as a long-term objective.

■ The second definition of alternance is that it is a means of introducing new ideas into the current school and training system. In a new training context, work – especially manual work – should be one aspect of education, an integral part of schooling.

■ The third view is that alternance is a channel between training agencies and job opportunities. In other words, it is a way of regulating the labour market and a transi-

tion phase between school and working life.

**Q.** What are the objectives associated with this concept of alternance?

**A.** Disregarding terminological differences, an entirely new system of education should be devised. Traditional divisions between school and work in the life cycle should be reappraised. Alternance is relevant to any time spent in education and training, but it is also relevant to the whole of working life. Undue stress should be placed neither on school nor on work, but each should become open to the other. To achieve this the whole system of education and training will have to be unified. The training channels for young people and adults should no longer be separate. Even more important, and far more difficult, there must be an awareness of the need for common planning areas for work and school.

**Q.** The concept of 'common planning areas' means that we should create the timing and machinery for linking two spheres that have traditionally kept apart, school and work. But how?

**A.** If school and work converge, it will pave the way for a cultural and technical reappraisal of the manner and content of school learning, still conditioned by the stress on humanistic culture, and the ways in which we organize work and production, which are conditioned by the constraints of innovation and technological rationalization.

In this search for unity, it will be the school that will be called upon to make the greater effort. It must achieve a new educational and teaching dimension, incorporating the most important aspects of the production system.

**Q.** The school system is often called into question by people concerned with vocational training, who say that school curricula, methods and objectives should be redefined. What do you propose as a new model of education?

**A.** The new model of education, based on a concept that does not exist in schools today, education for work, may be summarized as follows:

- (a) learning of theory (or the rules) within the school;
- (b) simulation, or guided example, in the laboratory;
- (c) application of the rules in a real-life context, in other words during practical work experience;
- (d) within the structure of the school and in the presence of everyone involved in the previous phases, a critical review of both content and the relationship between the variables occurring during the real-life process.

Before this can be achieved, however, training objectives will have to be reconsidered. This in turn will lead to a redefinition of school curricula, which should be organized

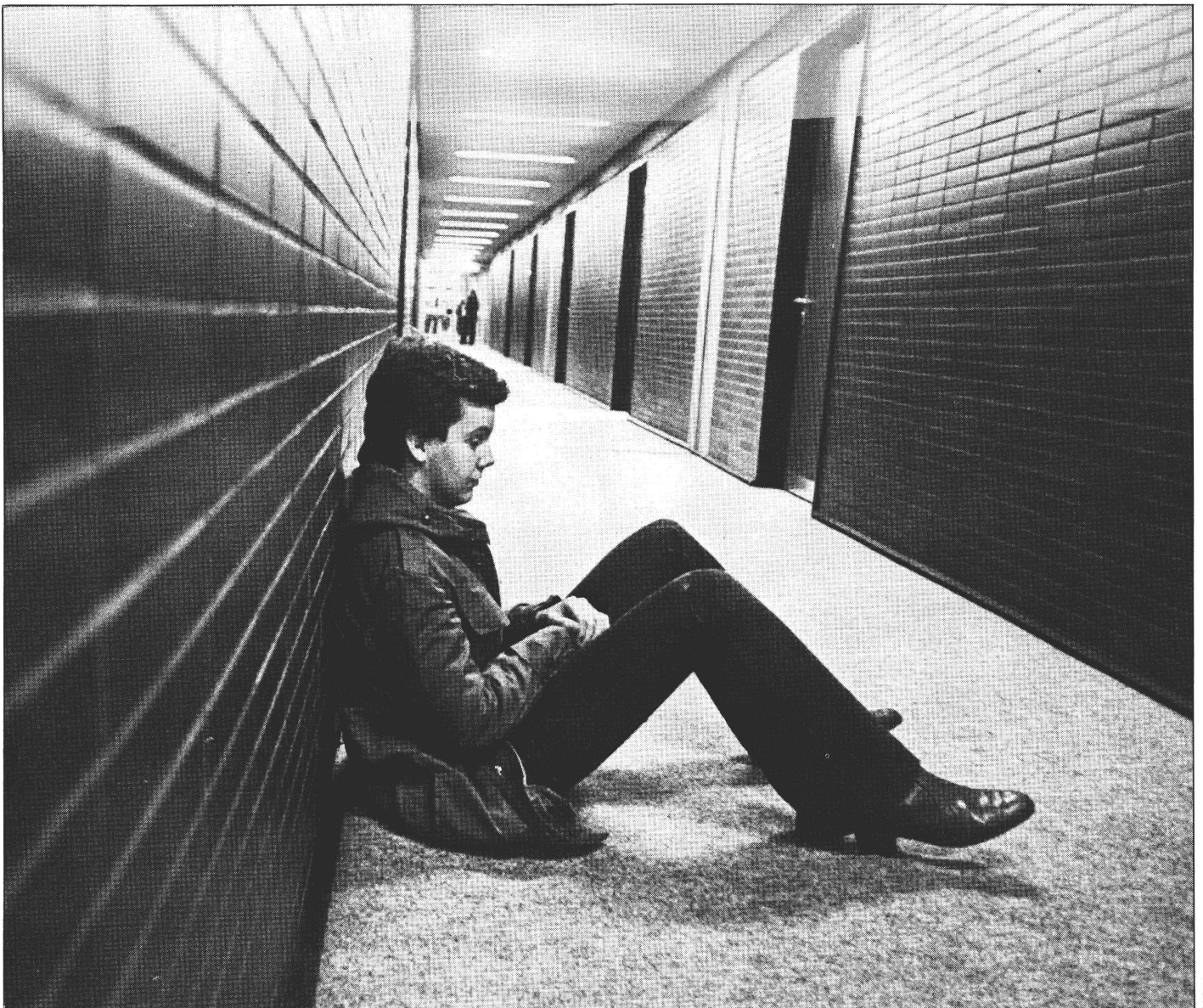
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with extreme flexibility so that different forms of practical experience can be combined with theoretical learning.

Q. Does this also imply a rethinking of the role of the teacher and the theoretical and practical instructor?

A. Of course: the concept of teacher training should be reviewed and at the same time the training and teaching abilities of practitioners should be taken into account. Within a company or organization, the man on the shop floor, the technician or the office

worker may not always be the person best suited to what is basically a teaching role. It is to be hoped that there will be closer links between such people and teachers, especially the teachers of technical and practical subjects.



## Marie-José Montalescot

Interview: F. Morgan-Gérard

Marie-José Montalescot, Délégation à l'Enseignement la Formation et l'Emploi, conseil National du patronat français

**Q.** Mrs Montalescot, the concept of alternance training seems to be enjoying a measure of success in France. Is it a new phenomenon? How would you define the concept?

**A.** The first point to be made is that alternance training existed before there was any formal definition of the concept, as typified by the 1971 reform of apprenticeship in France and the increasingly common practice of making on-the-job experience a compulsory part of young people's course of studies.

Following its practical beginnings, alternance training is now defined as the acquisition of vocational training that combines the learning of theory with the learning of practical skills on the job, its object being to ease the transition from school to working life by relating what is taught to what happens at work.

Today French law defines certain categories of alternance training. According to the Law of 12 July 1980 on alternating vocational training courses organized in liaison with bodies in the working world, such courses 'in methodical sequence and following a specific educational method, associate the general and technical education dispensed by public or private educational or training establishments, bodies or departments or in-company training officers with the knowledge and practical expertise acquired by the performance of an activity in the workplace'.

This definition was contained in a law which was not widely applied in practice. It was succeeded by a new legislative definition set out in an order issued on 26 March 1982 covering measures designed to help 16- to 18-year-olds acquire a job skill and take their place in society. It stated that 'in a sequence and following a teaching method appropriate to the diversity of young peo-

ple's situations, alternating training courses combine general and vocational education and training with knowledge acquired through the performance of an activity in the workplace and preparation for integration into the life of society'.

Mention should also be made of one approach to this concept that may be extended over the next few years: the text of an agreement reached between organizations representing employers and employees on 21 September 1982 'recommends the strengthening of the necessary ties between what is taught and the reality of company life'.

Finally, a new bill on alternance vocational training is being introduced to replace the law of 12 July 1980. It describes different categories of alternance training whose common feature is that they link theoretical instruction with work within the company for the purpose of acquiring vocational skills.

**Q.** Who are the beneficiaries of alternance training?

**A.** The field of application of most of the measures that introduce alternance training systems is limited to specific categories of young people: certain age groups, for instance, or youngsters who, because of their level of school education, do not have direct access to a career or further studies. Taken as a whole, however, existing arrangements for alternance training are for young people of 16 or over.

**Q.** What forms may alternance training take?

**A.** A distinction may be made between five types of alternance training:

■ *Alternance training for young people at school, coming under the heading of 'concerted education'*: this is for young people

in technical schools studying for a vocational diploma, a compulsory part of the course being a period of six to ten weeks' work experience during the school year.

■ *Alternance training for students*: most engineering colleges, management training colleges, colleges providing professional training for the higher grades in the civil service, certain universities and university institutes of technology include compulsory periods of experience in a work environment, the length of which varies.

■ *Further vocational guidance and sandwich training periods of work experience*: these are designed for 16 to 18-year old job-seekers who have left school without obtaining any job-related skills and have not yet obtained a contract of employment or apprenticeship. The periods of work experience involve both theoretical learning and periods of varying duration spent in a working environment.

■ *Apprenticeship*: this is designed for the 16–20 age group. The two-year apprenticeship contract signed by the young person and the employer comes under the heading of a specific type of contract of employment under which the apprentice attends a training centre and is also trained through his experience at the place of work. The proportion of time spent in each ranges from half-and-half in industry to a minimum of 360-hours' theory a year for craft apprentices. Apprenticeship always leads to a vocational diploma.

■ *Contract of employment and training*: this is aimed at the 18–26 age group (although in exceptional cases it is open to 17-year olds upwards, with no upper age limit), who receive further training under a contract of employment. It differs from other forms of alternance training in that the stress is on the job itself. Theory is taught during the period of work, the number of hours' theoretical learning rang-

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ing from 120 to 500 hours over a year or 500 to 1 200 hours over two years.

Finally, there is a plan to start up alternance training for the young unemployed aged over 18.

Q. What impact to you think alternance training will make?

A. The list of the forms of alternance training gives a rough indication of the essential objectives:

to promote access to employment by guiding the young person in his choice of career and helping him to acquire job skills. This approach demonstrates the concern to help the kind of young people who have been prevented from acquiring those skills because the traditional teaching methods do not meet their needs, the youngsters who find it easier to learn by practical experience rather than through abstract theory.

Other consequences are expected:

■ *The effects on the traditional methods of education:* alternance should act as a stimulus for adapting education to the needs of today's world, in particular by providing an incentive to trainers to find out more about the careers for which they are preparing their young people and, more

generally, enabling them to convey a more realistic picture of working life than is the case today.

■ *The effects on the economic world:* alternance training should help employers to find the skilled personnel they need in a modern economy.

Q. What do you see as the practical procedures for linking the world of training with the working world?

A. Here we should distinguish between two aspects: pedagogic: work experience will not be effectively preparing young people to embark on their careers if it is a 'watered-down version'. Furthermore, in the training it provides that the company should not create a replica of school.

The logical conclusion is that any measure setting up artificial workplaces within companies or specific settings for the work training of young people would conflict with alternance training objectives and be against young people's interests.

financial: in France, part of the funds for alternance training come out of the national budget, part from the employers. The procedures for that portion of the finance derived from the employers are:

- under contracts of employment and training, the balance of the cost borne by the employer is considered to be the company's share of the funding of adult vocational training;

- expenses incurred by employers in financing other alternance training schemes are recovered from the apprenticeship tax.

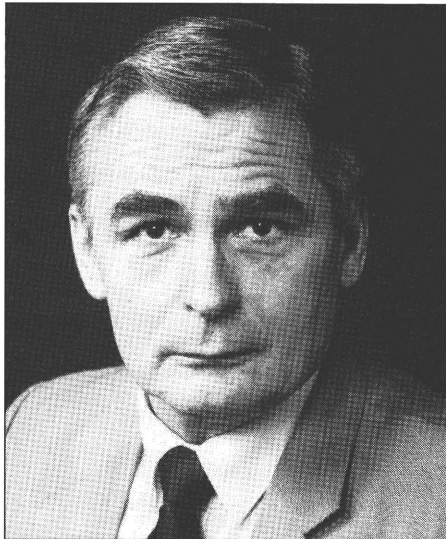
Q. Are companies able to meet these expenses?

A. There are difficulties. Today the resources on which companies can draw to finance such activities are dwindling. Part of the cost they incur for training has now in fact merely been transferred to public funds, despite opposition from both sides of industry.

In practice, under the measures in question, companies are obliged to pay over to the Treasury almost one-fifth of their contribution towards the funding of adult training, without receiving anything in return for the training they provide to young people or their existing work force. In the same way, the apprenticeship tax has been increased from 0.5% to 0.6% of their payroll; the original idea was that this increase would be used to set up alternance training, but it has now become no more than an additional payment to the Treasury.



JAKOBI



## G. Fehrenbach

*Interview: B. Sellin*

G. Fehrenbach, Vice-President of Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB), the German Trade Unions Confederation, on 'Alternance training', Düsseldorf, 9 February 1983

**Q.** The dual system in the Federal Republic of Germany is often held up as the key to the solution of the youth unemployment problem. Do you share this view?

**A.** A qualitatively good and quantitatively adequate form of alternance training can undoubtedly make a major contribution to improving the employment prospects of many young people, particularly if it is closely related to their eventual occupations.

It is important, however, for a wide range of skills that can be used over a long period to be taught during training so that the employee has the ability to adjust quickly to changing requirements.

**Q.** What proposals does the DGB itself have or support for coming nearer to achieving the goal of a training for all school-leavers, including those leaving special schools, young foreigners and the handicapped?

**A.** We must achieve a situation in which all firms and authorities capable of providing training take on an even larger number of young people for training in skilled jobs. Requiring all firms and authorities to provide training on a quota basis might help in this respect. Under this system they would have to take on a certain percentage of young people for training.

Those not fulfilling their quota should have to pay a training levy.

Another important feature would be the requirement to notify the relevant authori-

ties of all training places available. The data base must be generally improved to make for a clear and transparent picture of the situation as regards training.

**Q.** Many firms and employers in the Federal Republic of Germany are deeply committed to providing training places for the next generation of employees. On the other hand, many firms, especially medium-sized and large companies in industry and the service sector, train only as many young people as they need to meet their short-term manpower requirements. Others do not provide any training at all. What can be done to make better use of the extensive and qualitatively good training capacities that large firms have and/or to ensure that the burden is more equally shared between firms which provide training and those that do not?

**A.** Firms and authorities must be induced to provide training in occupations with good future prospects for more people than they themselves need. This must not result in a decline in the quality of training, as is sometimes the case, especially in small firms. Training in occupations with a future is particularly important because the number of young people becoming unemployed after their training has risen sharply recently.

Studies have shown that about 50% of all trained employees change their occupation within ten years of completing their training. How many do so voluntarily, to gain promotion or obtain a technician's or master craftsman's qualification, for exam-

ple, and how many are forced to do so because employment and job prospects are poor, is very difficult to say.

The DGB attaches primary importance to the introduction of a financing arrangement under which the burden of training is shared more fairly between firms which provide training and those which do not. Financing arrangements of this kind could be governed either by legislation or by collective agreements, as is already the case in the construction and horticultural sectors, for instance.

Greater emphasis than in the past must be placed on the State's responsibility for vocational training, and this should be done with legislation on financing and also by extending the many existing vocational training courses in which full qualifications can be obtained at vocational schools and training centres run by groups of firms. There is a special need for more such courses where regional and structural factors have resulted in a shortage of training places or excessive concentration on certain occupations. Greater provision must also be made in this respect for categories of people at a particular disadvantage. What the Federal Government is now doing under the programme for the disadvantaged is very welcome, but it is far from enough when we consider the numbers leaving lower-grade secondary schools without certificates, the many young people leaving special schools, young foreigners and so on.

In the longer term, the trade unions would like to see the upper level of the secondary

# The opinion of

school system changed to enable far more 'dual qualification' certificates to be obtained, giving access both to a university education and to a skilled occupation. A number of promising experiments are being made along these lines, the special secondary level in North Rhine-Westphalia and the Hibernia School in the Ruhr district being examples.

**Q.** The craft industry traditionally trains more young people than it can offer permanent jobs on the completion of their training. In the past, when the economic situation was better, those trained in this way could easily find employment in other firms and sectors. But structural and cyclical factors now mean that this is becoming increasingly difficult, as the high rate of unemployment among young people aged 20 to 25 shows. What must be done to improve job and employment prospects, and are these prospects perhaps so poor because the quality and nature of training leave something to be desired or are forcing many young people into occupations where the prospects are not good in the longer term?

**A.** It must be admitted that the quality of training in craft and small firms is not satisfactory in some cases. Although the proportion of supplementary training schemes organized by groups of firms has increased and more and more group training centres have been set up in recent years, there are still by no means enough of them. As a result of structural changes and special-

ization in craft and other small firms, the proportion of systematic training provided at group centres needs to be substantially increased.

There must also be greater approximation of the content of training to facilitate the transition from a craft occupation to an industrial occupation, for instance. But the same is true of administrative occupations.

**Q.** Although the concept of alternance training favoured by the European Community concerns the dual system and the training of young people, it also seeks to forge a life-long link between an employee's learning and work on the job and in school. In the present budgetary and economic situation, however, the opportunities for extending training schemes to include adults in this way seem very limited. How can the opportunities for releasing employees from their work for continuing education and training be increased, as the trade unions have frequently demanded?

**A.** The Federal Employment Institution is already doing important work in the areas of continuing education and training, retraining and advanced training under the Employment Promotion Act. But with the rise in the unemployment figures and associated costs cuts have increasingly been made in recent years even though what is really needed is an anticyclical approach.

In view of the technological changes that are taking place and of the exclusion from the production process of growing numbers of

unskilled and semi-skilled workers, there is an urgent need for this aspect to be covered by both legislation and collective agreements.

**Q.** Do you feel that a concept of this kind could become an important element in the achievement of a fairer distribution of work between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'? Could it, in other words, contribute to social balance and peace, at a time of radical change in economic structures and technology?

**A.** The unions want not only a general reduction in the working week to 35 hours but also a tenth year of compulsory general education and a reduction in the number of years people work by bringing forward the retirement age.

As regards releasing employees from their work for training purposes, the unions would like to see comprehensive educational leave arrangements for all employees. Such leave could be granted relatively easily in large firms and is frequently granted by individual employers. In small firms there is still considerable opposition.

In view of the urgent need for provisions in this area and the fact that the situation in all the Member States is as unsatisfactory as it is here, the Community should take an appropriate initiative on leave of absence for training, educational leave and continuing education and training. This is an area in which the Community could play an important role in the context of the debate on shorter working hours.





# The opinion of



## Otto Esser

*Interview: B. Sellin*

Otto Esser, President of Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (BDA), the Federal Union of Employers' Associations

**Q.** The dual system in the Federal Republic of Germany is often held up as the key to the solution of the youth unemployment problem. Do you share this view?

**A.** The dual system has played a decisive part in keeping youth unemployment in the Federal Republic well below the level in other European countries. For example, at the end of December 1982 23.9% of all those unemployed in the Federal Republic were under 25, compared with 45.2% in France and 49.6% in Italy. 62% of all young people aged from 15 to 17 undergo on-the-job training. The extraordinary flexibility of the dual system and the enormous training efforts made by trade and industry have enabled the proportion of young people not receiving a full course of training to be reduced to around 10% in any age group despite the demographic trend and the economic difficulties. Experience shows that employees with a practical vocational qualification, as can be obtained through on-the-job training, are hit less hard by unemployment and find new jobs more quickly. The hard core of youth unemployment in this country is therefore concentrated specifically on the problem groups, e.g. school drop-outs, slow learners and young foreigners.

**Q.** What proposals does the BDA itself have or support for coming closer to achieving the generally acknowledged goal of a training for all school-leavers, including

those leaving special schools, young foreigners and the handicapped?

**A.** German employers support the goal of ensuring that as far as possible every young person who wants and is suitable for training is guaranteed the opportunity of obtaining it. This goal has been virtually achieved in recent years. However, despite back-up measures in schools and other quarters, not all young people are suited or motivated to take a course of training. A solution therefore still has to be found to the problem of the unqualified among the young unemployed. Our feeling is that the prospects of integrating these young people could be improved if they underwent a year of practical vocational training in firms or training centres run by groups of firms.

**Q.** Many firms and employers in the Federal Republic of Germany are deeply committed to providing training places for the next generation of employees. On the other hand, many firms, especially medium-sized and large companies in industry and the service sector, train only as many young people as they need to meet their short-term manpower requirements. Others do not provide any training at all. What can be done to make better use of the extensive and qualitatively good training capacities that large firms have and/or to ensure that the burden is more equally shared between firms which provide training and those that do not?

**A.** By far the majority of medium-sized and large firms in industry and the service sector provide training. Many of the firms which do not provide training are fairly small or are not suitable for this purpose. As a result of the extensive demand among young people for training places in firms and the social duty employers have to the younger generation, firms providing training, in all sectors, have had to train more skilled workers than they themselves will require in the short term. The numbers trained in past years show that, despite the difficult employment situation, employers have recognized the social importance of training as well as its economic function.

As employers have proved that they are more than willing to train young people, I see no need for a system of burden-sharing between firms which provide training and firms which do not. The employers themselves have never called for burden-sharing of this kind. The Federal Government has rightly pointed out that in a country such as ours, with an extensive training system covering all sectors of employment, under which the vast majority of training places are offered without financial incentives as a result of an attitude largely determined by tradition and social mores, financial assistance from a levy system would be mostly used for services which can be rendered without such assistance.

**Q.** Craft and small firms traditionally train more young people than they can offer

# The opinion of



GLASER

permanent jobs on the completion of their training. In the past, when the economic situation was better, those trained in this way could easily find employment in other firms and sectors. But structural and cyclical factors now mean that this is becoming increasingly difficult, as the high rate of unemployment among young people aged 20 to 25 shows. What must be done to improve job and employment prospects, and are these prospects perhaps so poor because the quality and nature of training leave something to be desired or are forcing many young people into occupations where the prospects are not good in the longer term?

A. The deterioration of young people's job and employment prospects is a consequence of the general economic recession and the generally unfavourable employment situation and can in no way be ascribed to a decline in the quality of training in individual sectors of the economy. The claim that

the high unemployment rate among 20 to 25-year-olds is caused principally by young people who have been trained in craft occupations is simply wrong. It is also refuted by the fact that at the end of September 1982 people not being taken on as full employees after receiving training from firms accounted for only 2.8% of the total number of unemployed. This shows that those who have been trained in a craft occupation find a new job relatively quickly, which is also reflected by the short period they are out of work. At present, some firms unable to take on trainees on a normal basis are offering them part-time employment. In view of the difficult economic situation, I consider this course quite acceptable for beginners.

Q. Although the concept of alternance training favoured by the European Community concerns the dual system and the training of young people, it also seeks to forge a life-long link between an employee's learning and work on the job and in school. In the present budgetary and economic situation, however, the opportunities for extending training to include adults in this way seem very limited. Would German employers be prepared to make their contribution to such an increase in the opportunities employees have of obtaining leave of absence for continuing education and training? If so, on what conditions?

A. By far the majority of the gainfully employed in the Federal Republic have completed a course of vocational training under our comprehensive training system. In addition, many adults receive in-service training in their firms. The survey carried out by the Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft in 1980 showed that employers had spent over DM 8 000m on in-service training. The

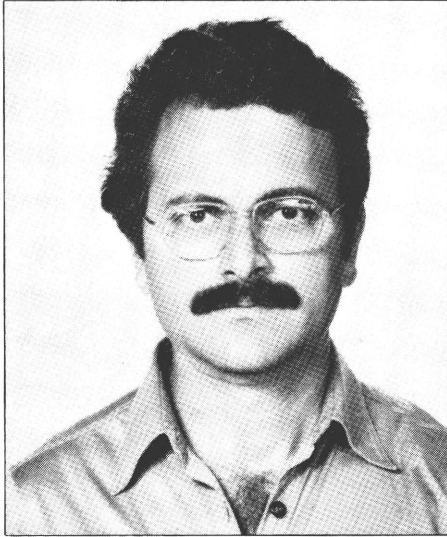
Federal Employment Institution also finances continuing education and training schemes for adults, some of the courses being held during or after working hours, others during periods of leave of absence.

We do not consider a right to leave of absence for continuing education and training in addition to the opportunities that already exist to be a practicable solution to the labour market problems. Firms could not afford the additional cost of continuing education and training in the present economic situation. Experience with the relevant legislation in some *Länder* also reveals that little advantage is taken of educational leave for continuing vocational training. On the other hand, we do regard the schemes arranged by the Federal Employment Institution for those wanting training in an area not connected with their present employment as a worthwhile addition.

Q. Do you see a link between the system of initial vocational training and programmes of continuing education and training?

A. As a rule, continuing education and training builds on vocational training. Vocational training also lays the foundations for the individual's willingness and ability to continue learning so that he can adjust to technical and organizational changes in the future. The requirements made of continuing vocational training are therefore a direct result of a firm's practical needs. The varied structure of continuing training courses ensures that they are geared both to the requirements of the economy and to the employee's continuing training needs. The wide range of courses available in the Federal Republic shows that considerable importance is attached to continuing education and training.

# The opinion of



## Stavros K. Stavrou

*Interview: D. Guerra*

Stavros K. Stavrou, Lecturer at the Aristoteles University of Salonika

**Q.** Does Greece have a system of alternance training? If so, could you give a brief description.

**A.** Yes, Greece does have a form of training – the ‘apprenticeship’ – based on the idea underlying alternance training. It was first introduced in 1952 under the supervision of the Employment Ministry. Since 1969 the ‘apprenticeship’ scheme has been operated or supervised by the Organization for the Employment of the Potential Labour Force (OAED).

This system comprises some 30 training programmes, all now taking three years (formerly two to four years). The ‘apprentices’ spend six hours a day in a firm doing work appropriate to their specialized field and then, in the late afternoon, attend an OAED vocational school for theoretical instruction (three hours). Of the 45 schools of this kind, most of which are run by organizations other than firms, 19 can offer board and lodging almost free of charge principally to young people who would

otherwise have some distance to travel to receive their training. The OAED is responsible for assigning young people to firms. The pay received by the ‘apprentices’ rises every six months from initially 30% to finally 100% of the wage paid to fully qualified workers in the occupation concerned. The ‘apprentices’ wages and their social insurance contributions are paid by the (public- or private-sector) employer. ‘Apprentice-ships’ are open to young people aged from 14 to 20 who have completed their compulsory education (6 years until 1976, thereafter 9 years). This form of training has thus been integrated into the lowest level of a vertically structured vocational training system which to all intents and purposes has three levels. The total number of ‘apprentices’ has settled down to about 10 000 in recent years, which is approximately equivalent to 15% of all young people opting for initial vocational training on the completion of their compulsory education.

**Q.** The gap between the education and training system and working life is one of

the factors that led to the promotion of alternance training concepts. How is this development progressing in Greece, and what stage has it now reached?

**A.** The gap between working life on the one hand and the subjects taught and methods used in training on the other is very wide at all stages of the Greek vocational training system, particularly in the training courses supervised by the Education Ministry, which are taken by about 90% of all vocational school pupils: apart from the above-mentioned ‘apprenticeship’, almost all vocational training is confined to schools. The ratio of lessons on theory to those spent in the laboratory is around 65:35, while the practical training for which provision is made here and there is either ignored owing to the lack of control or, as is usually the case, bears no logical relation to the subject areas covered by the training. Provided certain conditions were satisfied, the ‘apprenticeship’ scheme could therefore play a very important and even trend-setting role in the approximation of vocational training to actual work and constructive

# The opinion of

interplay between the two. The need for this convergence or linkage is all the greater in Greece since vocational training faces the challenge of meeting an extremely wide and rapidly changing range of qualification requirements, with very 'backward' and 'modern' work content and processes existing side by side in many sectors of the economy.

Unfortunately, the 'apprenticeship' has not yet been able to make so productive a contribution, having been designed and implemented as a 'training programme' to provide some of the manpower needed for a degree of industrialization in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. Introduced as a relatively short-term regulative, the 'apprenticeship' has not been incorporated in any comprehensive education policy or plan or seen as a worthy experiment in alternative training. Having been completely cut off from other training activities, it has in fact competed in many subject areas and at the same level of training with similar, full-time school courses organized by the Education Ministry. Rather than coordination, mutual support and fruitful dialogue between the Employment and Education Ministries with a view to establishing a new and better training model, there has been inflexible demarcation, reflecting a subliminal conflict of authority. The importance of the 'apprenticeship' for Greek vocational training has consequently remained both quantitatively and qualitatively marginal.

Q. What prospects do you think there are of the concept of alternance training developing within the Greek education and training system?

A. A very high proportion of pupils wanting general education or to go to university, high youth unemployment, training programmes which are conspicuously unworldly, the absence of initial vocational training in important sectors such as the construction industry – these are just *some* examples of a situation which simply cries out for the development of alternance training in one form or another. However, a number of basic conditions must first be met if a concept of this kind is to be assured of success, the most important being briefly: (a) the introduction of 'work experience' into grammar school teaching; (b) careful and comprehensive vocational guidance and advice, with visits to selected firms; (c) incorporation of the useful experience gained with the 'apprenticeship' scheme in a carefully weighed and uniform vocational training plan; (d) the laying of the legislative and administrative foundations for the initiation and implementation of experimental alternance training programmes; (e) gradual, cautious but consistent introduction of the alternative(s) found to be preferable after a careful assessment of the pilot projects; (f) the active participation of employers' and employees' organizations; (g) allowances for regional peculiarities and developments.

## Key

- General secondary schools
- Vocational/technical schools
- 'New-style' vocational schools

are full-time schools

- The OAED 'apprenticeship' is an informal type of alternance training, in which instruction at a vocational school follows on-the-job experience on the same day. As a 'training programme', it is only loosely attached to the rest of the education system.

LM labour market

BG basic knowledge and skills of a general nature

ISS in-school selection by pupils who specialize in given occupations and also have the opportunity of applying for places *only* at higher technical/vocational schools (Katte)

I 'package' of subjects leading to the study of science and engineering

II 'package' of subjects leading to the study of medicine and biology

III 'package' of subjects leading to the study of literature and philosophy

IV 'package' of subjects leading to the study of economics and social sciences

Apart from the 'Panhellenic entrance examinations', all entrance examinations (not end-of-year tests in schools) have been abolished.

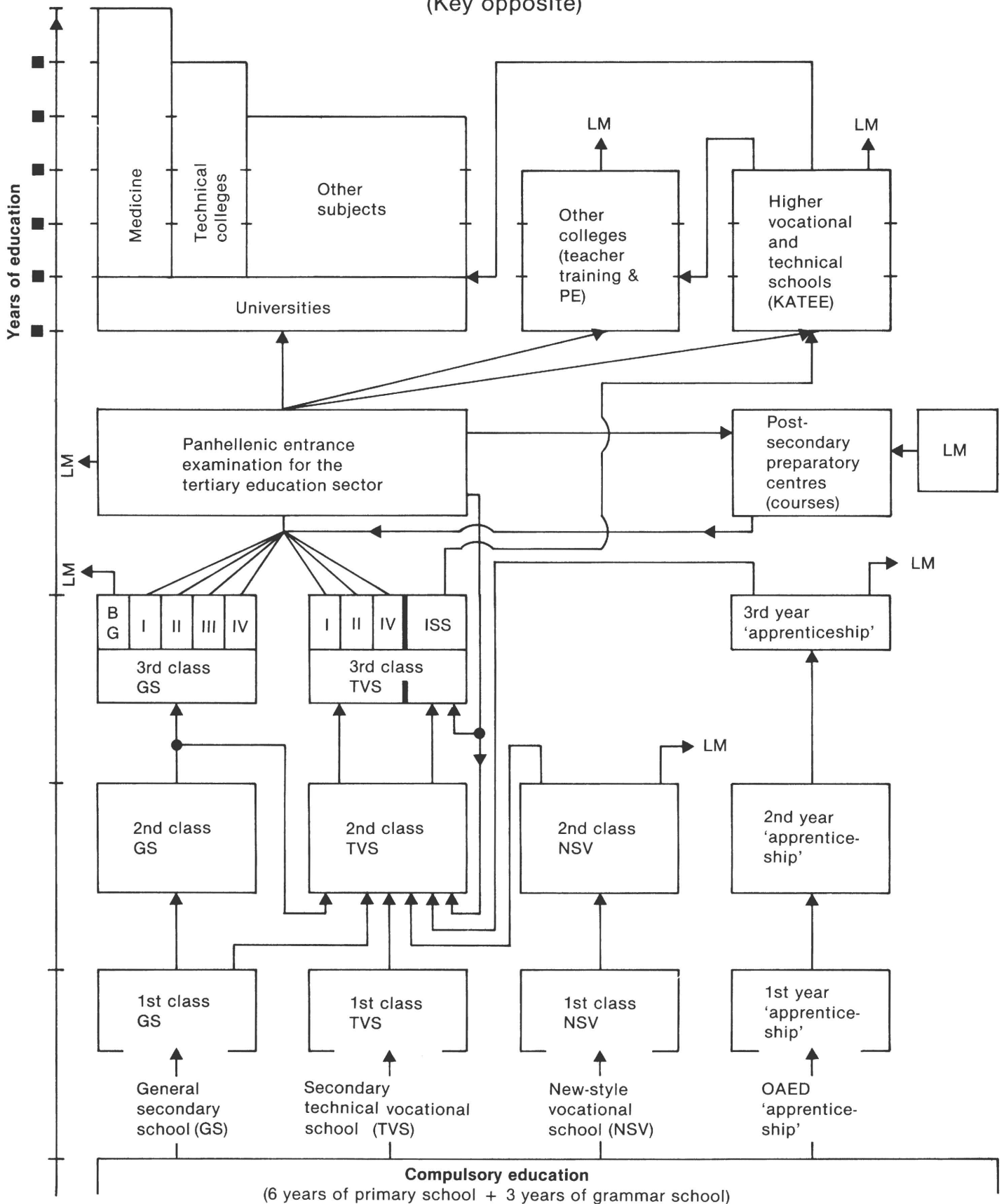
Diagram compiled by:

S. N. Paleokrassas (Keme, Athens)  
S. K. Stavrou (University of Salonika)

# The opinion of

## Structure of the Greek education system 1982/83

(Key opposite)



# The opinion of

## Niall Greene

*Interview: Mr Adams*

Niall Greene, Youth Employment Agency,  
4/5 Harcourt Road – Dublin 2

**Q.** Is the concept of alternance a useful one in today's situation in Ireland?

**A.** The concept of alternance is a useful one in the Irish situation but not a new one at a pedagogical level. I have, frankly, been surprised during the past year to find so much attention being paid to what was for me, working on the design of in-company training programmes 14 or 15 years ago, a normal model for changing behaviour among workers whether at production or management level: having imparted new information of skills at a knowledge level people need the opportunity to test and reinforce what they have learned so that it influences behaviour in the desired direction. In its more sophisticated aspects at the time to which I refer the process permitted the trainee to also participate in determining the desirability of the new behaviour but that was perhaps a less accepted practice at that time than now. And, of course, the basic alternance model is one which has been a feature of apprenticeship training in Ireland and the UK for a very long time indeed without our getting too excited about elevating it to a whole new training philosophy. So at the level of individual course or programme design it is useful to remind those involved on a regular basis of the need to provide learners as an essential part of the learning experience with the opportunity to test and reinforce new forms of behaviour in a 'real world' environment. Our colleagues in the educational system, in particular, may be in need of such reminders on a very regular basis.

But that is not where it seems to me that the principle of alternance has most to offer us, especially here in Ireland. Its greater relevance is in providing us with a framework within which our education and manpower programmes can be reoriented to provide for better access to an integrated range of services for our young people.

**Q.** How, therefore, do you see the principles of alternance being applied in planning and

implementing programmes for young people?

**A.** We are now beginning to address in Ireland the need to realign our education and manpower services to suit a situation in which it is not sufficient just to focus on the demand side of the equation. Clearly there are bigger issues here than simply ones of volume – a whole new set of structures and linkages are needed to give the manpower services a coherence and relevance for the consumer when that consumer is a young person rather than an employer. Many of the simplistic distinctions that we have tolerated in the past between what is appropriately in the 'education system' and what is in the 'training system' become fairly meaningless in this new context. What was previously able to survive as a series of vertically organized services must now be realigned to provide a horizontally integrated continuum of options for young people at any point along which they may, through opportunity or choice, elect to enter the working population. It is in getting the optimum design for such an integrated approach that I find the alternance approach of particular value to us. It gives a framework within which we can see how the individual elements now labelled education, work experience, assessment and counselling and training may be related to one another most fruitfully.

**Q.** Is the alternance concept of more value within the education or within the training systems in Ireland?

**A.** As I have mentioned earlier alternance is not a new idea in Irish industrial training. It may be necessary or desirable to widen the range of application and to make for a better understanding of the processes at work but basically the approach, at least in the sense of its place in a learning system, is well implanted. I suspect, however, that it may have almost a revolutionary impact in the education sphere. This can happen at three levels:

- as a pedagogical tool,
- as a link with and a means to test behaviour in the so-called real world,
- as a link with the other services for young people and especially those designed to assist with their entry to work.

All of the evidence we have so far is that once you start opening up schools as institutions and teachers and pupils to an interactive curricular process with the local community a very rich and complex process seems to get underway which affects not just those in education but those in the environment also. And, of course, alternance for those in school must involve experience of the training system and other manpower services as well as work on employers' premises, community service, etc. It would be surprising if, in all of that, not only will young people have a more useful learning system within which to develop but that even without any normative action the more rigid demarcations begin to get broken down between different components in what should essentially be a single process by which young people are helped to make the transition to the labour force.

**Q.** Has alternance been more widely accepted by the educational institutions, the training institutions or employers?

**A.** I think the rate of take-up has been in the reverse order to that which you have listed. In-company applications led to early use of linked training/work models in the institutional training world and now the educational world is beginning to take notice. However, it is noticeable that in Ireland it is in that sector of second-level education which has always had a strong vocational training function that alternance-type approaches are seen to be most widespread. Even here the response has been largely as a result of local initiatives rather than encouragement from the centre although there

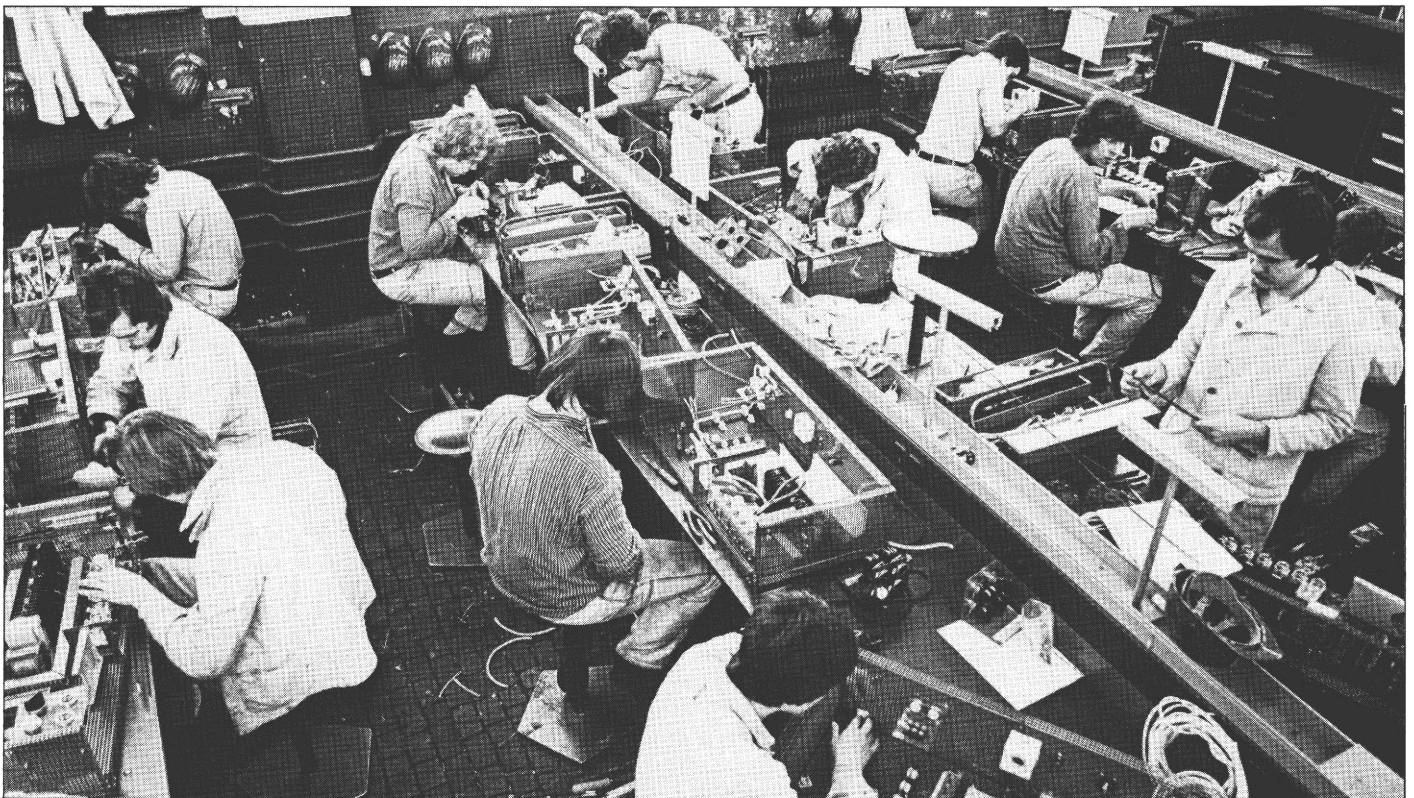
# The opinion of

has been, since 1978 official curricular provision for alternance based pre-employment courses in vocational and comprehensive schools. However, our private-sector secondary schools, which account for upwards of 70% of our past compulsory education pupils, have a strong 'academic' bias enshrined in a single national curriculum and set of regulations. There is now a discernible ground swell of support among teachers and parents for an approach in these schools more relevant to the needs of those who will be entering the labour force after school rather than entering third-level education. The projects that have been initiated, even in the absence of control sanction, at local level in response to that perceived need virtually all involve alternance-type approaches.

**Q.** How does the agency support and encourage alternance?

**A.** As I said earlier within the Youth Employment Agency proper we see alternance as a means of looking at the integration process as a whole rather than just as a learning tool. Without any great missionary effort on any one's part it is true to say that to the extent that there is development and change in our education and training services it is towards the set of principles now called alternance. With our particular concern in the Agency with the problems of early school-leavers and those with poor educational attainment we see considerable scope for wider alternance applications. That is not to say, of course, that we see its relevance only in terms of that target group

but rather that alternance offers an alternative route to that which has already proved to be less than adequate to the needs of such young people. However, we are concerned in the Agency about possible job displacement effects of widescale placements on employers' premises and we have just initiated a high-level investigation in conjunction with the employers, trade unions and the manpower services into what steps need to be taken to avoid such impediments to more widespread use of linked education/training and work applications. Finally, I should say that the Agency has recently been nominated by the Irish Government to be the Irish contact point with the EEC on alternance studies so that we now have an additional concrete reason for taking more than a detached view of the subject.



# The opinion of



## Mrs Ginjaar-Maas

*Interview: B. Sellin*

Mrs Ginjaar-Maas, State Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Science, The Hague

**Q.** State Secretary, the Netherlands has long had an extensive system of educational courses alternating with practical training aimed at young people in the form of the apprenticeship system, but the number of places available has fallen. Given the increasing demand on the part of young people for training, what is the Government doing to counter this fall?

**A.** The apprenticeship system combines an element of day-time schooling with one of practical training, for which obviously a job is needed. The need is to ensure that more young people are able to find the necessary jobs. First of all we are looking at the statutory minimum wage for young people, which is on the high side and therefore, you might almost say, an obstacle to finding work. Secondly we have for a number of years been giving grants to employers who take on young people. These two measures relate directly to the job element in apprentice training. But you must also look at the overall policy of successive governments, which has for some years been aimed at bringing down unemployment as a whole, since the problems affecting the apprenticeship system are only one aspect of our overall unemployment problem. So far we have not been very successful, I must admit, and we realize that the Government must take additional measures.

**Q.** Young people embarking on an apprenticeship in this country must first of all show that they have a job and that their employer is willing to release them for the part-time schooling programme. What financial en-

couragements do you offer employers to convince them of the need to invest in the training of the younger generation?

**A.** As well as covering this financial question the consultations between the trade unions and employers organizations always stress the question of how we can give effect to our responsibility towards young people and ensure that they find employment. This matter has high priority in the policy not only of the Government but also of non-governmental organizations, the unions and employers. I would refer you to the agreements which are being reached in industry to the effect that older employees give up work earlier than they used to – much earlier, even. In this way they free a job for someone younger. Consideration is also being given to reducing the number of hours worked each week, giving young people jobs for 32 – 36 hours per week, so that when older employees retire more young people can get employment.

**Q.** Is the Government also considering splitting apprenticeship places in two, so that two young people can share training and employment?

**A.** That possibility is being looked into. But you must remember that in an apprenticeship the experience acquired on the job is an essential element in the training received, and if you halve the on-the-job experience you also halve the essence of your training. I believe we must be very cautious in this matter. That is why we are working on plans for regional training centres – these would make it easier to split

the job of an apprentice in two, since he or she would still have the opportunity to acquire part of the experience needed at a regional centre.

**Q.** In the recent past we have been experimenting in the Netherlands with a new form of training, the Shorter Intermediate Vocational Education (KMBO) programme, which seeks to combine in-school training with periods of practical work experience supervised by the educational centre concerned. How do you see this new type of alternance training developing in the future and how does it relate to the traditional apprenticeship schemes – in other words, do you see any possibility in the longer term of merging the two into a single system?

**A.** As far as their schooling component is concerned, apprenticeships are of course already a form of part-time training, with two days of school and three of work. The express aim of the new KMBO courses is to provide both theoretical training and practical experience in the framework of a five-day school week, for experience by means of work experience sessions in industry. What this involves is not a job but rather periods of practical experience. Obviously there is a very close relation between what goes on in the apprenticeship system and what we are trying to achieve through the KMBO scheme. That is why it has been the intention from the start to give KMBO qualifications equal status with those of the apprenticeship system. They are different training routes, but the final result must be of equal value, whether you



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have a KMBO certificate or an elementary apprentice training certificate. The holder will have the same rights because he or she has the same level of occupational skill.

Why is the scheme experimental? In fact there are two reasons. The first was that we wanted to organize this type of day-time schooling in such a way as to make it comparable with apprentice training. This meant that programmes had to be developed. The second reason was that the KMBO scheme is a very costly form of education – it currently costs the community around 10 000 guilders per student, as against just over half that in primary and secondary education. It is not the intention that when the Lower Vocational Schools have one set of equipment which is used for 20 hours each week we should buy another set for KMBO schools which would also be used for 20 hours a week, especially as there is still more apparatus in the Intermediate Vocational Schools and apprentice training institutes. My aim is very much to see that the equipment we have is used to the full. Curricula have had to be developed, of course, and that itself requires effort and money. If we subtract that from the 10 000 guilders the total is reduced to 8 000 – which is still quite a lot. Another problem is that the KMBO course groups are very small. The category of young people these courses are aimed at are those who have had the fewest opportunities and advantages. There are no admission criteria apart from a minimum age limit of 16 years – these are open-access courses. This means that some of the students have a great deal of leeway to make up. That is the purpose of the KMBO programme and, I think, one of the reasons why it is so expensive.

This was an experimental programme partly because we had to develop curricula and partly because we really didn't have the necessary money – and during a trial period it is possible to limit spending by limiting the number of courses provided. Around 9 000 students were involved, at 26 centres, and that is in fact only a drop in the ocean. When the KMBO programme is fully operational we expect it to cater for around 60 000 students altogether. The present Government has said that vocational education has very high priority, and what that entails is in the first place the expansion and reinforcement, where possible, of the apprenticeship system and the introduction of the KMBO programme.

Q. Introduction regulations, ending the trial period. . .

A. We have calculated that full implementation will cost 400 million guilders, and that is out of a budget in which economies totalling 2 000 million will have to be made between now and 1986. So what we are doing now is looking for ways of making savings. Secondly, the Government has decided that despite all the financial difficulties we are facing in this country an extra 150 million is to be spent on the KMBO programme. I believe that KMBO will be a reality by 1986, that is, within the lifetime of the present Government.

The second part of your question concerned the possibility of merging the apprenticeship system and the KMBO programme in the longer term. In the long term we should like to move towards the restructuring of the whole vocational training system for 16-18 year-olds, with full coordination between the shorter and longer courses and the part-time and full-time courses. One important element in the change would be the division of the schooling component into separate sections, with a given number of teaching units conferring a given number of points. This would make it possible to transfer from a full-time to a part-time course or vice-versa, producing a flexible system. This is the direction we want to move in, and it would indeed lead to a merging of the apprenticeship and KMBO systems. Where a student on a KMBO course gets a job, he or she must be able to transfer to the apprenticeship system. The opposite move must also be possible, so that apprentices who lose their job can transfer to a KMBO course. And that of course requires flexibility.

Q. Over the next few years the European Community intends giving all young people the guarantee of either a job or a place on a vocational training course for the two years following the end of compulsory schooling. How do you propose achieving this in the Netherlands?

A. Such a scheme is of course highly desirable, and as far as the training element is concerned we can give the guarantee concerned. I think it is true to say that in this country there is a universal right to education and training. It is something that is generally accepted, and something to which society attaches great importance. So the problem is not the educational side of the proposed guarantee but the employment side. If you ask me how we can give such a guarantee of employment I can only answer: by compelling private industry to take on

young people. And that is something I regard as incompatible with our social system. So it is fortunate that we have five years in which to make the arrangements. These are matters which have to be settled in consultation between Government, employers and trade unions – and that brings us back to the question of the wages paid to young people. The situation in this country is not entirely comparable with that in FR of Germany, where – if I have understood the position correctly – young people who have just started an apprenticeship earn very little. As they progress their earnings go on increasing, until they become fully trained employees. In the Netherlands, in contrast, apprentices are paid the full statutory minimum wage for young employees from their first day on the job. If we are going to talk about guaranteed employment and the willingness of industry to cooperate in such a scheme, I would expect employers to say straight away: we recognize our social duty and are willing to play our part at all levels, but money has to be earned before it can be spent on – for example – jobs for young people. Then the statutory minimum wage will quite certainly come up for discussion. Our trade unions will have to pluck up the courage to look at how things are organized in the FR of Germany. It is quite clear to me that the work that young people do increases in value as their training progresses, and their pay could progress towards a full income at the same time. Really what we are talking about here is a blurring of the distinction between the employment of young people and the periods of practical work experience – 'stages' – which currently form part of training courses in this country. That is the direction in which we are moving, I think, but it cannot all be done in one day. That is why – I repeat – I am glad that the Community has given us five years to make the necessary arrangements.

Q. In the longer term, do you see any possibility of extending the concept of alternance training as used in the European Community to older workers who are threatened with unemployment as a result of their inadequate or obsolescent training? In your view, could the expansion of retraining facilities in the form of educational leave or sabbatical years be a method of achieving a more equal distribution of work or of shortening working hours in a flexible way?

A. It is of course impossible that someone whose training was completed in 1980 will

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still be adequately trained in the year 2000 for the jobs which will exist at the end of the century. This means that educational facilities are needed to give older people whose knowledge and skills are in danger of becoming obsolete the opportunity of updating them. That is something we are all agreed on – the question is, how? You mentioned sabbatical years. Educational leave, with workers' salaries being paid by their employers during their absence, is something we have long dreamed of, but at the moment I do not think we can afford it. The plan has not been abandoned – it was included in the agreement between the parties making up the present Government – but considering the financial difficulties we are facing it is not something I am optimistic about. In this country we have large numbers of courses which are provided in the evenings and on Saturdays, but most of

them are concerned with general education and too few are geared to occupational skills. Vocational courses are needed in the adult education sector to give older people – women as well as men, I would stress – the chance of learning new things, so that they can earn their living in a changing society. This must have a high priority for us.

Q. What projects does the Government have lined up for the near future to counter youth unemployment?

A. A complete youth employment programme is due before the summer recess – this is something that was agreed on when the Government took office in November 1982. I believe that an important element in it will be the strengthening of training courses. Another will undoubtedly be the shortening of the working week. We are

considering replacing the minimum weekly wage with a minimum hourly wage, since that would make it easier to go over to shorter working weeks. Also I think that in the consultations between trade unions and employers a great deal of pressure will be put on employers to take on more young people in particular. We are all very conscious that if young people are unemployed for any length of time they are bound to start feeling that they have no place in our society. The feeling that one is superfluous, unnecessary, is the worst thing that can happen to someone. The impact is of course greatest on young people, and that is why the fight against youth unemployment in the Netherlands has the highest priority, despite all our financial difficulties.

Thank you, State Secretary.

## Take alternance training, for example ...

*Duccio Guerra*

Even in vocational training fashions come and go, as proved by the ephemeral success of certain solutions dreamed up on the shop floor. Alternance was one solution very much in vogue in about the late 1970s. Recession being the mother of invention, it led to the discovery, or rediscovery, of devices old and new. Training was one of them. With a contracting labour market, vocational training – a subschool on its creation with all the vices and rituals of the school – was ill-suited to the task of helping people find jobs. At a time when so few opportunities were available, the skills demanded were practical and job-related, not diplomas and bits of paper unaccompanied by competence in practical skills. Remedial solutions were hastily sought in almost every country (FR of Germany, confident in its dual system, was the exception) and ‘emergency measures’ introduced. People liked the idea of alternance training, although they quickly realized it would be impossible to arrive at a standardized content for such training in the European Community as a whole.

Today people are saying that alternance is no longer top of the pops and is slowly sliding down the charts, that the interest in vocational training aroused in the first half of the 1970s is gradually subsiding.

Alternance training, however, exists regardless of fashion or the popularity of one solution rather than another. It has always existed, as Matteo Vita rightly says in the beginning of the interview featured in this issue. It has existed insofar as people have always been aware that know-how is not imparted in the classroom (and know-how means more than the ability to dismantle a combustion engine; if this were not so, Montecatini would be right in saying that it is better acquired in the school than in the workshop).

The traditional craftsman’s shop may not have been the ideal place for teaching a trade, but it cannot be argued that the young people who went there were regarded merely as cheap labour or that the employer’s sole method of training was the box on the ears. If it were, how can one explain all the know-how passed down from one craftsman to another in Europe until recent times? The combination of theoretical learning and practical experience is an age-old formula in training for the ‘noble’ professions, those where the risks are high unless the job is properly done . . . training for work as doctors, say, or pilots.



Viallet rightly argues in his article that only enterprising organizations capable of innovation can bring experiments in alternance to life. This is true, however, not just of alternance but of the whole range of human endeavour calling for at least minimal initiative (and teaching always demands initiative). It is less useful to fall back on drawing up lists of needs, of what must or must not be done. It is true, for example, that alternance training can only be provided with the employer’s cooperation, but what is the point of the affirmation unless one goes on to explain why the employer should take on such a task when it is not in itself of economic value to his enterprise, a criterion inherent in the very philosophy of entrepreneurial activity?

In his article Jallade states that ‘many large companies have always been conscious of their responsibility for training’. Indeed, companies large and small, because of the very fact that they are enterprises, have always had a clear idea of the relationship between training, vocational skills and productivity. This is one of the rules of the game in the liberal economy of our countries. By its nature, the company cannot operate without due regard for economic forces. The reason why it sometimes does so in practice is the social pressure exerted through the medium of workers’ associations.

Michele Colasanto’s lucid analysis suggests a key to understanding how the concept of alternance fits into today’s scenario, a scenario of some turbulence and tension generated by change. There is a current tendency towards a reordering of what has been the typical pattern of our existence: school, training, work and retirement. As a result, the education and training system is under growing pressure to fulfil a whole range of purposes, vocational and non-vocational,

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# Dossier

to meet the needs of the young, adults and the old. In this sense, alternance is becoming an inevitable response to social change, both structural and cultural.

We feel it would be Utopian and even harmful to look on alternance as a rigid 'system', destined perhaps to replace existing training systems, its operating parameters defined by rule and rote ('who should govern alternance training?' wonders Jalade). Alternance is above all an option and, as such, it is a social and political issue. It provides an opportunity, as Montenat so rightly points out, 'to further a policy and

practice of vocational training, both for school-leavers and for adults, that gives the (future) worker mastery over his working tools, in occupational social and economic terms'. Alternance is something that will be achieved step by step. Wherever it is the chosen practice, wherever those trainer-cum-researchers discussed by Viallet work, wherever the company and the school come together to fill in the gaps in the learning imparted by each other, alternance training will become part of our experience, our cultural background, our lives.

Take alternance, for example . . . In the 'dossier' in this issue, we describe a few

alternance schemes that have been from different countries. Their methods and techniques may differ but they share a common objective: to reconcile the two factors, training and work, and combine them to form a logical whole.

The experience described here shows that alternance is not just a formula or a fashion but exists in practice. We do not claim to have discovered new models to be imitated, nor to have put together a representative corpus of case histories. If we have provided a little more information on what is going on, we shall be satisfied.



## In Italy

### ENAIIP

ENTE NAZIONALE ACLI ISTRUZIONE PROFESSIONALE

## Transition between apprenticeship and training contracts

### ■ Organization/person responsible for the project

Enaip, Ente Nazionale ACLI per l'Istruzione Professionale. Corporate body recognized by Presidential Decree 1113, 5. 4. 1961, published in Gazzetta Ufficiale 271. Address: Via Marcora 18/20, 00153 Rome, Italy. Domenico Pascazi

### ■ Location

Reggio Emilia, Genoa and Taranto.

### ■ Project funding

In pursuance of the EEC Council of Ministers resolution of 1976, the project is part of a wider pilot scheme for the alternance training and transition of young people of school and vocational training age, promoted by the EEC. The project was commissioned by the Ministry of Education, with financial support from the European Economic Community. It was implemented by Enaip as part of its vocational training activities financed by regional public bodies in Emilia Romagna, Liguria and Apulia.

### Description of project

The alternance between training and work was organized as part of the two-year vocational training course specifically designed for young unemployed persons wishing to acquire job skills for work in the engineering industry (general mechanics/milling machine operators).

In its methods and instruction, the project was structured on the same lines as an in-company training course. It had been observed that Enaip's vocational training centres taking part in the pilot scheme had accumulated a good deal of experience in the type of training designed to impart multiple skills, based on the research method of learning. The vocational training centre staff were consulted on the practical arrangements for the organization of the in-company training from the very beginning, in other words at the time of planning and working out the details of the project as a whole.

The period spent by trainees in the workplace was divided into phases and the objectives, learning content, method and timing of each phase were specified.

The alternance scheme was viewed as one stage in the two-year training course, which itself was split into four modules. The scheme was slotted into the third module, forming the second year of the course, as shown in the following diagram.

# Dossier

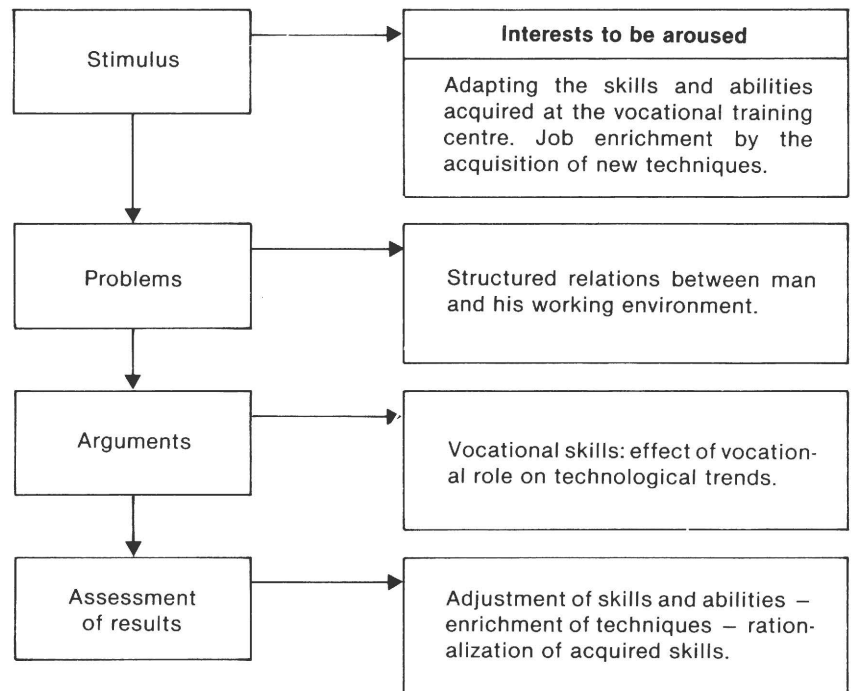
**Module one**  
Remedial work and preparatory vocational instruction  
Duration: 500 – 600 hours  
OBJECTIVES:  
a) catching up with general basic education normally acquired by the minimum school-leaving age (language and mathematical skills)  
b) familiarization with the products, processes and technologies associated with the skill level and employment sector in question  
c) acquisition of general knowledge of the local, social and economic context and its relationship with production

**Module two**  
Interdisciplinary training for the skill level  
Duration: 500 – 600 hours  
OBJECTIVES:  
a) consolidation of technical knowledge needed for familiarization with the production cycle  
b) acquisition of ability to use sector-related technologies and awareness of their common features  
c) first contact with the problems of work organization

**Module three**  
Introduction to the production environment – technical/scientific and socio-cultural rationalization  
Duration: 500 – 600 hours  
Minimum/maximum time spent in workplace: 1 409 – 300 hours  
OBJECTIVES:  
a) awareness of production process and job roles related to that process  
b) awareness of behaviour patterns in the production environment and organizational and union problems within the factory

**Module four**  
Duration: 500 – 600 hours  
a) technical review of work experience and supplementary vocational learning  
b) bringing educational background up to the corresponding level of academic achievement

**Certificate of qualification**



The project was designed for trainees under the age of 18 hoping to acquire their first job skills.

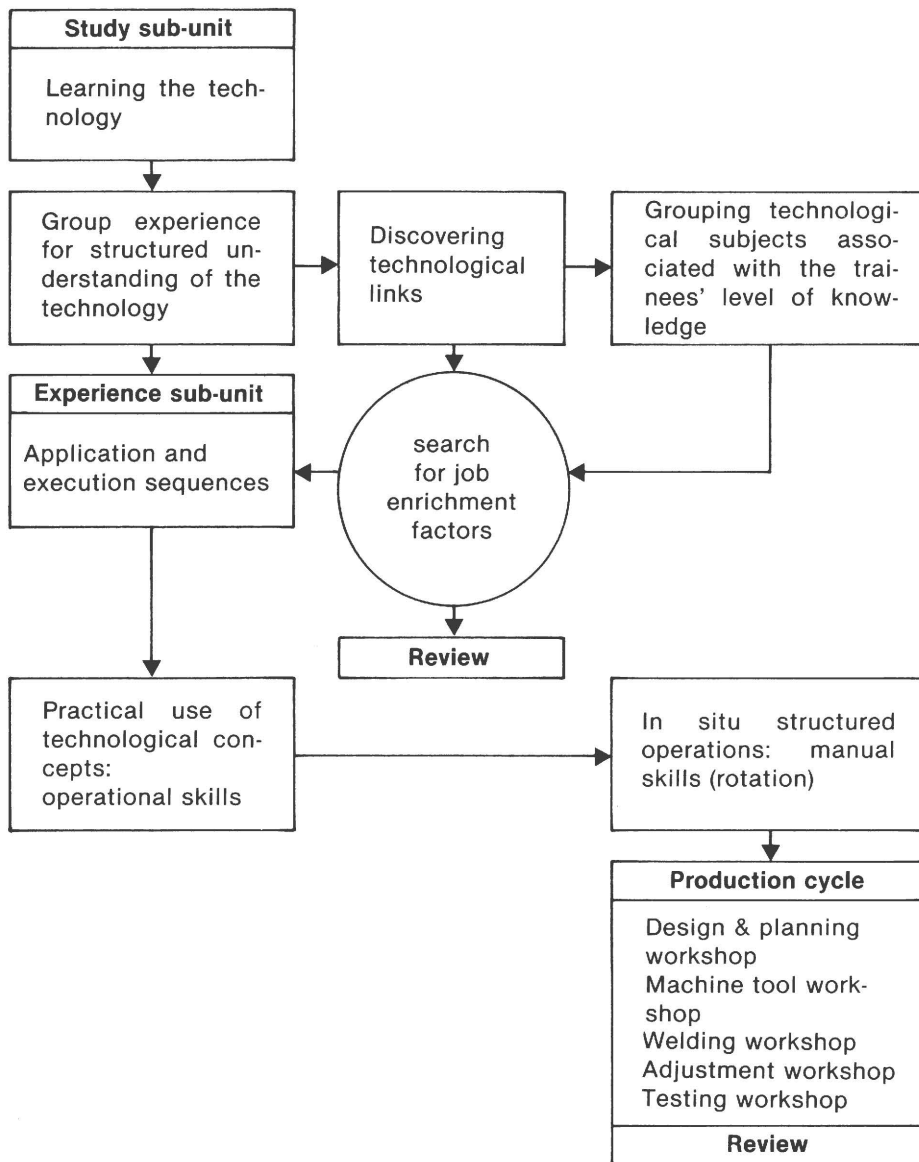
The methodological/teaching sequence in the practical application of the alternance training was as follows:

The main feature of the in-company training period was the breakdown of the alternance module into learning units.

The basic learning unit in the alternance process was multidisciplinary: it covered subjects which were then reviewed in terms of the trainees' performance.

The learning unit was seen as an overall whole integrating the subjects to be mastered, strictly within the guidelines of preset objectives. The objectives were defined in terms of the action expected of the trainee after completing the work experience phase (performance).

The learning unit was structured as two specific but closely related phases (study sub-unit and experience sub-unit), as shown in the following diagram.



From this diagram it is apparent that in practice the essential part of the learning sequence in this period of work experience is the study sub-unit. The units consist of the following phases:

### Study sub-unit

*Phase 1:* 'learning the technology' – an introduction to technological information was given with the help of the company's technicians.

This was the 'information acquisition phase' in which the group of trainees gained a reasonable technological grounding in the problem in question.

*Phase 2:* 'understanding the technological information acquired in Phase 1'. This phase provided an opportunity for discussions between the trainees, instructors and technical experts within the company to promote a better understanding of the technological background acquired in Phase 1, taking an overall view of the production process.

One purpose of the 'understanding' phase was to help trainees to identify the way in each element of their 'technological knowledge' related to the others and to discover the various links for themselves, so that at a later date they would find it easier to learn in

a work situation. In this way they would be better placed to acquire the skills and abilities needed (job enrichment).

### Experience sub-unit

*Phase 3:* 'application and execution' – the third phase started where the study sub-unit left off.

This phase took place at the job station in the workplace. It was the phase during which the technical knowledge considered to be the most relevant to the job skills being acquired was directly applied. The technological and scientific concepts acquired were put to practical use and theory was combined with the know-how, so that this ability could later be applied to manual operations at the work station.

*Phase 4:* 'summary and evaluation' of what had been learned; revising and rounding out knowledge so that the trainees could go on to the next step.

### Objectives

The aim of the project was to promote the acquisition of job skills and abilities by introducing trainees directly to a production cycle; the process was not limited to the work done in one specific job but broadened to give an overall view of the working cycle in the company where the trainees were being integrated.

The educational targets to be attained during the period of in-company work experience were clearly stated, bearing in mind the distinction between educational targets and training goals.

The training goal was not intended to coincide with the educational objectives, which were defined solely as the 'behaviour pattern' the trainees were expected to achieve and the knowledge they were to acquire by the end of their in-company training period.

The criteria adopted when defining the educational objectives in terms of behaviour were essentially based on three clearly stated factors:

- the 'performance' expected of trainees at the end of the unit in question;
- the minimum and maximum limits of acceptability for that 'performance';
- the conditions under which the 'performance' was to be attained.

Bearing these general guidelines in mind, efforts were made to endow the technolog-

ical knowledge being acquired with a significance transcending mere technical considerations, by identifying the final objectives and the range of cognitive abilities according to Bloom's taxonomy.

To achieve the end objectives, it was decided that instructors should first analyze every aspect of the work process that was to be the setting for the trainees' work experience (from planning to implementation and testing).

Within that process – viewed as a unified context – certain job-related learning units were identified as best suited to trainees' needs. These were seen as subjects for direct application and execution at the work station and as starting points for reviewing the process as a whole, to give trainees a broader understanding of what they were doing.

In the event, the period of in-company training achieved three specific aims:

- the acquisition of greater vocational skills, partly by trying out knowledge previously learned in the training centre;
- gaining additional vocational competence (job enrichment) to give a broader view than could be conferred by learning how to do any one job;
- becoming aware of the vocational role, seen not as a passive manual activity but as active and critical involvement in the production process.

The skills entailed in the in-company training period were those of general mechanic and milling machine operator. The end objectives for each skill were identified, as well as a series of interim objectives leading up to the end objectives.

A preliminary objective of a general nature was stated. This was related to the introduction of a worker into a job setting: familiarity with the production cycle and understanding of the importance of vocational roles to the production process.

To achieve this objective, intermediate aims were set, such as:

- knowing how work is organized;
- knowing about the problems that arise in planning and design, organization and vocational abilities;
- knowing about procurement of supplies and production control.

This preliminary stage was followed by the phase of direct in-company training. Specific aims were set for each step in the production process.

The final objective was to determine whether the trainees brought into the production cycle had added to their vocational skills, supporting them during that process and helping them to apply their basic theoretical and practical knowledge of how to use equipment and tools in the course of their work.

The sequence in which the study and experience units were reviewed was as follows:

- 1 — machine tools
- 2 — adjustment
- 3 — welding and/or
- 4 — heat treatment
- 5 — inspection and testing

The intermediate aims were stated as a knowledge of:

- the specific processing phase;
- the various techniques associated with that processing phase;
- the need for precision in carrying out mechanical processing work and measurement of error.

The end objective in the first phase was to define the role and function of the engineering department, the intermediate aims being as follows:

- knowing how to list each step in product processing;
- knowing how to identify the technological aspects of the product being made;
- knowing how to identify the main tasks of a person working in the engineering department.

The end objective in the second phase, however, was stated as defining the role and function of the worker in the company, with the following as the intermediate aims:

- being able to define how the company is organized;
- knowing about how production is organized;
- being able to define the degree of involvement of workers at each level of production process technologies;
- being able to identify the specific duties of a worker in a work situation.

An analysis of the in-company training objectives shows that they were taken as a yardstick for a continuous comparison between two types of demand: demand as expressed by employers and demand as expressed by trainees, the clients of the vocational training service.

Although the main concern in the alternance project was to help trainees master

the most significant job-related skills and abilities by on-the-job learning, to include the learning of manual skills, during the process of learning those skills attention also had to be focused on making the trainees more independent in their work by acquiring such qualities as:

- *understanding*, an essential step in the acquisition of the general background knowledge (literacy, numeracy and a grounding in science and technology) that trainees needed for a more fruitful approach to their career;

- *application*, a necessary step to ensure trainees could marshal the terms and concepts inherent in the subjects of study and grasp their relevance to practical work;

- *deductive reasoning*, a necessary step in transferring the concepts that have been learned to new situations.

## Evaluation

During the course of the project it became apparent that its objective had been achieved, even though it was obviously impossible to bring every single trainee up to the highest level because each region in Italy has its own legislation and its own type of industry. The main factor was the number of hours each training centre could spend on alternance training. This meant that the minimum number of hours feasible in each centre had to be taken into account when setting the goals. There was one advantage to this constraint, however, as it proved the validity of innovatory forms of in-company vocational training even if only a limited number of hours is available, since the experience may be repeated in other work settings at different periods of time.

Apart from considerations of the time available, when a flexible method of instruction is adopted (such as a modular system), practitioners need more than a knowledge of teaching methods; they must also be capable of planning.

A broader awareness of the problems arising within a company and the technological content of a production cycle will make it easier for them to communicate with the company's management. They will realize that the system as a whole can be developed and reinforced only if the areas of competence and terms of reference of each institution – the training centre and the company – can be integrated, retaining due



respect for the other institution's autonomy within its own sphere.

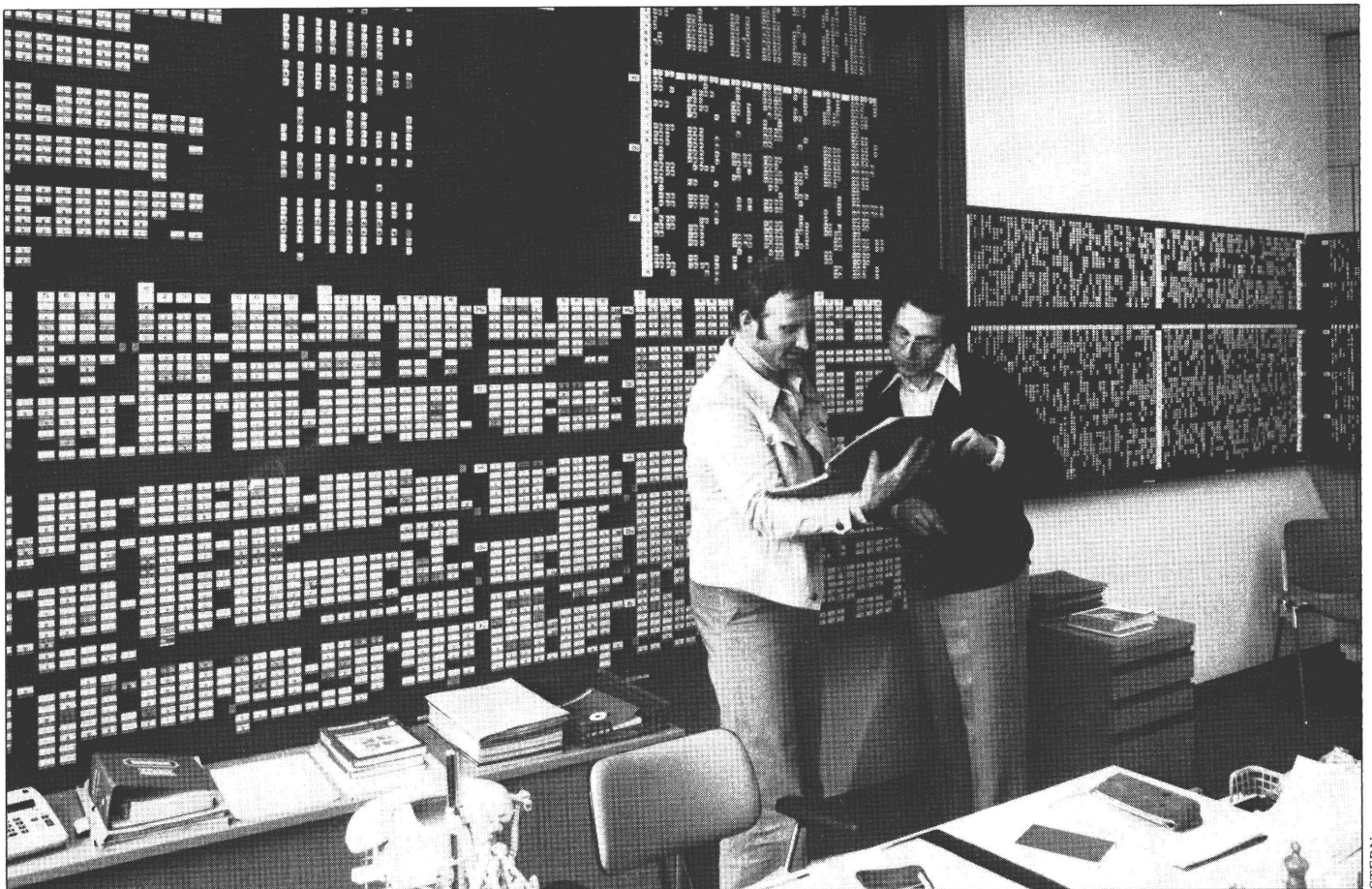
In shaping the alternance training in such a way as to come as close as possible to the desired result, every training centre must have both quantitative and qualitative information on its own environment. There should be wider recognition of the concept of alternance and the opportunity it affords young people to receive the kind of training that treats job skills as changing and evolving, the kind of training through which they are taught soundly-based skills and abilities and learn how to work independently, exercising a sense of responsibility. In the final analysis, it is the role of vocational training as a whole which should be the subject of

active, forward-looking thought. The underlying aim of any effort to revitalize and adapt training to meet the new and complex challenges of our changing industrial society should be to increase employment.

Such generalizations regarding revitalization and change may be all very well in theory but they are far less helpful in practice. When faced with the task of organizing periods of in-company training, one's judgement may be distorted by knowing that such and such a firm needs three milling machine operators or that another requires two general mechanics, for instance. Skills should be viewed not as isolated products but as technologies. The experiment in alternance training which

ended in 1982 pointed to very suitable ways of meeting these needs, including of course the general methodological approach suggested under the guidelines for the organization and planning of alternance training. In our opinion, they also include the content of such training. In practice, training content is expressed in terms of trainees' behavioural relationships; these should be functional and lend themselves to the quantification of the vocational skills required.

The model of alternance devised and tested, therefore, makes a substantial contribution towards revitalizing vocational training and fills a gap. Training centre teams should constantly be aware of the need for continuity in vocational training and for keeping that training abreast of the times.





Regione Lombardia

## Training linked with local needs:

a skill acquisition project based on the alternance of study and work

### ■ Organization/person responsible for the project

Dr. Emilio Paccioretti, Deputy Director, Region of Lombardy Vocational Training Centre, Via E. Ferrario 3, Gallarate (Varese), Italy. Tel. 794.703.

### ■ Location

The area surrounding the town of Gallarate, an industrial centre to the South of the Province of Varese, consisting of the communes from which most of the training centre students are drawn and are employed.

### ■ Project funding

The project was financed out of the standard allocation towards the Centre's budget.

The experimental project, promoted by the Region of Lombardy's Education and Vocational Training Commission, could count on certain statutory concessions to help with the organization of work within the training centre.

### Description of training action

As part of the fourth module, devoted to the 'application of manual skills and theoretical knowledge acquired to real life situations, familiarization with the company and skill definition', over a period of six weeks 54 trainees alternated training in 24 factories during the morning with afternoon sessions at the training centre.

In the factory, each trainee worked beside a member of the work force or a technician with a similar skill. Every trainee joined in the normal production cycle, although of course he did not have to work at production line rates.

Both trainees and tutors filled in work sheets on what happened during the day,

entering their opinions and notes on the experience. During the alternance period, these work sheets and notes were analyzed in the training centre; the analysis highlighted the theoretical subjects or practical exercises which would be needed during afternoon sessions or the final brushing-up period.

The instructors maintained close contact with everybody concerned each one visiting a small group of companies at least once a week. Through their contacts with employers, technicians and skilled workmen, the instructors refreshed their own knowledge of vocational subjects, enriching their professional knowledge.

The trainees – 15- and 16-year-old boys – found the experience very useful both

because of the new things they learned during the normal training cycle and because their practical experience in a production setting gave them an opportunity to make a more enlightened choice of career when embarking on their first jobs.

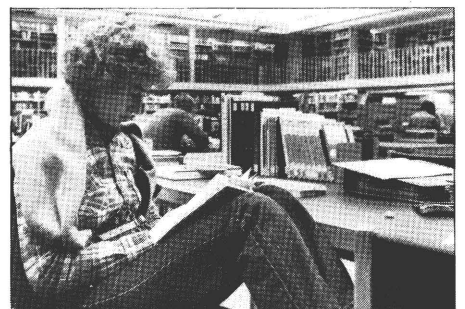
### Objectives

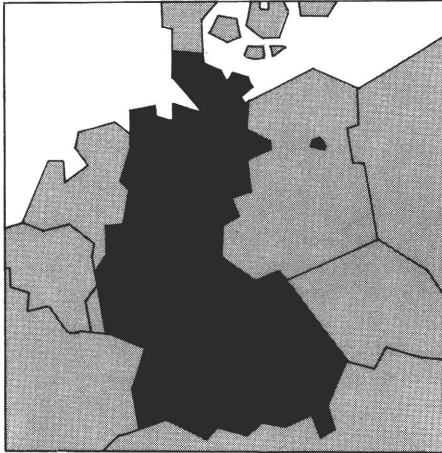
The general objective of the alternance project was to bridge the gap between the training provided and the training demanded, as far as possible.

The specific objectives were to: add to trainees' knowledge of technological and scientific processes; acquaint them with the way in which work is organized in real life; familiarize them with individual jobs in their chosen trade; help them discover the rules and social relationships that obtain within a company; and provide a yardstick for comparison of different production situations.

### Evaluation

All the parties involved considered that the project had been successful: company managers first of all, but also tutors, trainees and instructors. The main objectives attained were the more general ones: higher motivation among trainees, an opportunity for instructors to refresh their knowledge, an opportunity to compare different work situations and the development of closer relations between the training centre and employers. Only in some of the large companies was it possible to make a more detailed comparison between the job content and the training content of the skills acquired.





## In the Federal Republic of Germany

### Description of the training activities

At present 48 young Germans and Turks, male and female, are being trained in four building or ancillary building trades: roofing, painting, carpentry, and central heating and ventilation. The young people concerned are regarded as socially disadvantaged in respect of their family situation and school education and would not normally have any prospect of finding a training place or employment. They receive practical and theoretical training principally from trainers (master craftsmen and journeymen). For part of the working day and also during their free time they are attended by social pedagogues, some of whom work with the young people. Gaps in their theoretical knowledge are filled in back-up instruction provided by one male and one female vocational school teacher. The young people also attend the relevant vocational training schools like other young people undergoing training. The young foreigners are mostly Turks. Two architects, who concentrate on the urban renewal aspects, are also involved in the project.

The association has been assured of the long-term use of a number of extremely dilapidated houses in Berlin-Kreuzberg, which the young people are helping to repair and modernize in the course of their training. The concept is a departure both from the traditional pattern of accommodation in hostels and from normal on-the-job

## KreuzWerk

eingetragener Verein zur Förderung von  
**Selbsthilfe** bei  
**Stadterneuerung** und  
**Berufsausbildung**

## Vocational training and urban renewal involving socially disadvantaged young people

### ■ Project coordinator responsible

KreuzWerk e. V., Gemeinnütziger Verein zur Förderung von Selbsthilfe bei Stadterneuerung und Berufsausbildung, Spreewaldplatz 2, 1000 Berlin 36, Tel. No. 6 11 80 27.

- Wolfgang Ehrlinger (first chairman and construction coordinator)
- Gunthart Gude (manager, pedagogical leader)
- Dr. Peter Haas (secretary, technical coordinator)

### ■ Place

Berlin-Kreuzberg

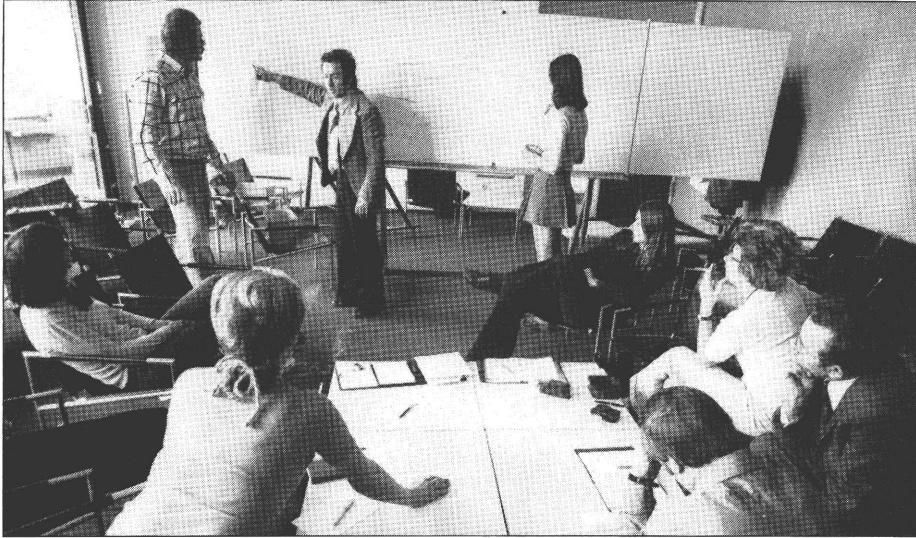
### ■ Financing

Body: Non-profit association.

Financing: Financing of board and lodging corresponding to the cost of hostel accommodation, special funds provided by the Senator for Education, Youth and Sport for the equipment of the workshop, donations, work done on building sites.

For the houses: Special funds provided under the Berlin Senate's repair and modernization programme.

# Dossier



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training. The intention is to combine vocational training, youth services (self-help) and urban renewal to form an overall concept. This means that everyone involved in the project has to do work which his or her occupation does not normally entail. We endeavour to relate theory to practice and teach in small groups.

## Objective

This training scheme pursues several objectives simultaneously:

- (a) enabling young people to obtain a final certificate in a craft occupation (journeyman's certificate);

- (b) teaching them the social skills they need to cope with their own affairs in employment and the private sphere;
- (c) through the urban renewal activities, reducing the number of dwellings standing empty and the speculation in housing;
- (d) showing how more can be done with youth service funds than merely accommodating young people in hostels;
- (e) showing how foreign and German, male and female young people can be trained, work and live together with relatively few problems;
- (f) forming a team whose members practise the performance of tasks to which they are not accustomed from their occupations or roles in life.

## Assessment

A conclusive assessment of this training scheme is not yet possible since the young people concerned are still in their first year of training.

However, the impression gained is that KreuzWerk e. V. can achieve the above-mentioned objectives.



## In France

### Description of training action

The general principle of the training provided is alternance, with one week spent at the Centre, one week with a company. During the first two months of the trainees' first year, however, the pattern is three weeks at the Centre followed by one week with a company (two periods).

The subjects are taught in 30 hour modules, which are structured at different levels and according to the experience acquired. In the first year there are 23 modules, 20 in the second year. Each module is a teaching unit of 20 sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, designed to ensure that trainees work through a progressive course over the year.

Each teacher responsible for a module draws up a summary of the main points tackled in the form of a practical manual. At the end of the course, trainees are given this manual, together with a bibliography and a list of useful addresses, to which they can refer back once they have started work.

*Monitoring of progress:* each full-time teacher is responsible for checking on the progress of a group of 20 trainees and giving them general guidance.

The Centre is divided into workshops of 10–12 trainees. At the end of each week spent at the Centre the group meets the 'tutor' responsible for advising and maintaining contact, and together they review the problems they have encountered on a practical level and in the course of their experience with the company.



## Applied office automation

### ■ Organization/person responsible for the project

INSTITUT DE GESTION SOCIALE, 25 Rue François 1<sup>er</sup>, 75008 Paris, is the body that has set up and now runs the Centre de formation d'apprentis 'bureautique appliquée' at 63 Avenue de Villiers, 75017, Paris.

Project leader: Micheline Blachère.

### ■ Location

Project trainees are drawn from the Ile de France region. The companies acting as hosts for in-company training are also located in this region, most of them in Paris and the inner suburban departments, Hauts de Seine, Seine Saint Denis and Val de Marne.

### ■ Project funding

The project is financed out of the 'apprenticeship tax' levied on employers (a quota of 20% of 0.5% of the employer's total wage bill).

# Dossier

*Teaching methods:* active teaching methods are used, based on the pooling of experience, discussion of real-life cases, audio visual techniques and practical training with modern equipment used in the fields of new technology; trainees are in constant contact with microcomputers and word processors. Special emphasis is placed on training in communications and in presentation, layout and spelling.

In general, the curricula are designed to help young people rapidly find their feet in specific jobs.

Nevertheless, the intention is also to avoid over-specialization and to promote not just professionalism but a general background education and an ability to take the initiative, as well as competence in methodology and conceptualization.

The criteria for admission are:

*motivation for embarking on working life;*

*an interest in shorthand-typing as a job and in the promotion prospects it affords to people with the ability to work on their own initiative;*

*general standard of educational attainment, especially in spelling, mathematics and the ability to express thoughts in good French.*

Applicants are interviewed individually by two people (a teacher and an employer's representative). They then take written tests: a spelling test, a test of their ability to express themselves and make précis, and a maths test.

In 1983, there were five groups, i.e. two second-year and three first-year groups. There were a total of 70 trainees at the Centre: 68 girls and 2 boys, their average age 17½.

## Objectives

In setting up the Centre, there were several objectives:

■ to make it easier for young people to find permanent employment, particularly



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girls. These youngsters are at risk of unemployment, and the 'job applicant' type of courses would not be adequate to provide the vocational skills they need;

■ the promotion of apprenticeship and alternance, aimed in particular at management and head offices of companies and organizations;

■ to meet employers' needs and expectations in a field subject to profound technological change as a result of the introduction of information technology and automation into the office;

■ to concentrate on innovation in the monitoring of educational progress and in vocational training, constantly keeping abreast of jobs and the employment situation.

### *Special features of the project*

The project has several special features:

■ it came into being as a result of research and analysis of the needs of a large number of professional bodies and companies (over 50 of which welcomed the project);

■ it has the advantage of cooperation with employers and being able to draw on the

educational expertise of other teaching establishments;

■ it offers an opportunity for technical training outside the traditional vocational systems, since it is designed for girls leaving school without an exam pass;

■ it provides training in vocational skills that includes office automation and communications and reprographics;

■ it develops a specific approach to education and training through alternance training and the modularization of learning, backed up by highly personalized monitoring and training in the acceptance of responsibility and in written and oral powers of expression.

## Evaluation

The Centre has been in existence since 1981. Its first set of trainees sat for the CAP in 1982. The pass rate was 80% (compared with the national average of 48%). All the girls who left have found employment, in other words the success rate has been 100%.

## Alternance training for young people

Documentation of selected texts published by the European Community and the Member States.

Michael Schelzky

This assessment attempts to give a general description of the development of the alternance training of young people by reference to selected documents published by the institutions of the European Community and the Member States. Particular importance is attached in this context to the **Council resolution of 18 December 1979 on linked work and training for young persons**<sup>1</sup>. Which the Council believes should be used to improve the employment prospects of young people, regarding it as a suitable means of adjusting vocational training systems to changes in the labour market situation. The resolution is also designed to promote development in the Member States which is harmonized as far as possible. The Council considers the linking of work and training especially appropriate in three kinds of situation:

- *Young persons undergoing apprenticeships or post-educational training courses,*
- *young job-seekers eligible for special training measures to facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market,*
- *young workers without adequate vocational training' (p. 1).*

The 'Guidelines for the Member States' comment on the content and concept of linked work and training, the supervision and recognition of training, remuneration and financial support, and working conditions and social protection. In the 'Guidelines for the Community' the Commission is requested 'to examine the conditions under which the European Social Fund might be associated with action by Member States . . . to develop linked work and training during the period of entry into working life' (p. 2).

The report of 13 October 1980 drawn up on behalf of the European Parliament's Committee on Social Affairs and Employment

on linking work and training for young persons in the Community<sup>2</sup> and the European Parliament's resolution of 13 March 1981<sup>3</sup> on the same subject criticize the Council resolution for departing from the Commission's proposals in a number of important respects. This is principally a reference to the Commission's suggestion that alternance should take place over periods of at least six months, of which the Council resolution takes no account, just as it ignores the call for emphasis to be placed on special efforts with regard to apprenticeship and other forms of training in tertiary-sector occupations. The proposal that at least one-fifth of the total training period should be spent off the job was replaced with the words 'a suitable minimum period'. In paragraph 8 of its resolution, the European Parliament deplores the way in which the Council's resolution waters down the Commission's proposals relating to 'the specific inclusion of alternance in Guidelines of the Social Fund' and 'the question of financial support for those on linked work and training schemes' (p. 72).

The communication from the Commission to the Council of 28 April 1980 entitled 'Guidelines for a Community labour market policy'<sup>4</sup> refers to a continuation 'of its [the Commission's] activities on linked training and employment' (p. 22). Having noted that the 'weakness' of the vocational training structures in a number of Member States is a 'matter for concern' and that 'the countries with the most developed apprenticeship system are also those who have been the most successful in the struggle against youth unemployment' (p. 22), it sees the need for Community action to supplement existing Social Fund activities with 'measures to help national systems to meet new economic and social requirements' (p. 26). The Council's resolution of 27 June 1980<sup>5</sup>

also reveals a desire for an improvement in the links between general education and vocational training. 'In particular, linked work and training should be developed in accordance with the guidelines of the Council resolution of 18 December 1979' (p. 3). In view of the importance of educational measures in influencing the employment situation, the report of 22 July 1981 drawn up on behalf of the European Parliament's Committee on Social Affairs and Employment on a Community labour market policy<sup>6</sup> stresses the enormous differences between the Member States' training systems. No two national training systems, it says, are the same, although they do have certain features in common: although not developed to the same extent everywhere, each country has its apprenticeship system involving linked work and training, and this is seen as the best means of facilitating the transition from school to working life. The European Parliament's resolution of 17 September 1981 on a Community labour market policy<sup>7</sup> reiterates the demand expressed in the report to make 'linked work and training schemes generally available' (p. 66). In its opinion on the development of the social situation in the Community in 1979,<sup>8</sup> the Economic and Social Committee (ESC), having assessed the problems, also concludes that 'the Commission should make a greater effort to introduce schemes for linked work and training ['alternance'] in which disadvantaged groups of persons — especially women, the elderly and persons whose capacity for work has diminished — should be more closely involved' (p. 37). The appeals made in the various resolutions, proposals and opinions for the Social Fund to be used as a labour market and vocational training policy support instrument to assist linked work and training schemes are reflected in the Commission's opinion on the review of the European Social Fund,<sup>9</sup> which supports the

idea of 'a training guarantee for all young people': '... the role of the Fund in supporting innovatory training and employment measures and their wider application within Member States and throughout the Community' must be developed. Referring to the Council's resolution on linked work and training, the opinion calls for fund aid on behalf of those under 18 to take the form of support to schemes 'combining training and work experience provisions' (p. 5). The removal of the limitation imposed by the present arrangement for granting assistance to schemes for young people under 25, whereby the Fund has been 'precluded from financing the initial training of young people immediately after the completion of compulsory schooling' (p. 9), would permit the introduction of schemes designed 'to make available a broad-based vocational training including work experience to all young people at the end of compulsory schooling' (p. 9).<sup>10</sup>

These Commission recommendations for action by the Fund are essentially a direct reference to the development of the common policy on vocational training and are included in the draft 'Resolution of the Council concerning vocational training policies in the European Communities in the 1980s'<sup>11</sup> submitted by the Commission to the Council, in which the Commission takes account of the diversity of training systems in the various Member States and proposes actions designed to encourage innovation and the qualitative improvement of these systems. It is felt that national policies and initiatives can be complemented and supported on a Community-wide basis 'by setting certain common goals or guidelines in order to respond to the need for greater convergence of policies in this field' (p. 9), by setting a framework to serve as a point of reference for relevant activities of the European Social Fund and by improving national policies through a regular exchange of views and dissemination of information at Community level. The proposal made in this document for a five-year programme of action concentrates on three broad priority spheres, one of which is the 'social and vocational preparation of young people for adult life and for entry into the labour market in the period following the end of full-time compulsory education . . . up to the age of 18, coupled with the intensification of training measures for young people up to 25 years of age . . .' (p. 9). These proposals take up the idea of the 'social guarantee' for young people, which the Commission complains has not yet been

adequately introduced in the Member States. It criticizes most Member States for designating as a social guarantee short-term vocational training schemes insufficiently integrated into existing training provisions. It sees this as confusing the purpose of the concept, which is to fight the causes rather than the mere symptoms of youth unemployment: '... a social guarantee for young people should be developed . . . as an integral part of a more equitable and rational policy of vocational training' (p. 13) with the aim, according to the Commission's document, of providing 'all young people with the opportunity to pass through a stage of transition, between the end of full-time compulsory schooling and entry into the labour market, during which they should be able to choose how to develop their social and vocational skills and prepare themselves for adult working life. . . . As a general principle all young people should be entitled to at least two years' further education, training or work experience after leaving full-time compulsory schooling' (p. 13). The Commission describes as the 'minimum training entitlement' of all young people is unconditional access to a one-year fulltime programme of social and vocational preparation for working life immediately after the end of compulsory schooling and an entitlement to a further year of vocational preparation before they reach the age of 25. The reference frame for the organization of these schemes should be the Council resolution on linked work and training, and proposals are also made for the establishment of training and production workshops and the extension of pilot projects in alternance training.

## Belgium

Now that the concept of alternance training for young people and its development as seen by the Community institutions have been discussed, it remains to be seen how far this form of vocational training has been introduced in the various Member States.

Alternance training within the meaning of the Council resolution of 18 December 1979 is not the dominant form of vocational training in Belgium, nor has it been institutionalized. Although full-time vocational school training has been joined by a dual form of apprenticeship training, which under the statutory provisions of the **Royal Decree** of 4 October 1976<sup>12</sup> is the responsibility of the Ministry for Small Firms and

Traders, only a small proportion of each age group opts for this type of training.

## Denmark

In Denmark Government action is geared to increasing the number of training places under the existing dual system and to testing and introducing new forms of training for young people. The Folketing's resolution of 4 June 1980 on training for young people 'calls on the Government to take the necessary action to ensure that all young people may undergo training.'<sup>13</sup> This youth guarantee is 'not an alternative to the existing arrangements but seeks to extend these arrangements and to align them with the underlying objective of encouraging the young unemployed to undergo training in which they can obtain a qualification, thus improving the prospects of the weakest in the labour market.'<sup>14</sup> Young people should be guaranteed, in the following order:

1. a place in normal training institution,
2. a special training place,
3. a combination of training and employment,
4. an offer of employment.' (p. 9)

The Government's report of 4 February 1982 to the Folketing provides for the reduction and eventual elimination of youth unemployment in three stages: an increase in measures taken under the education and employment policies, the tabling of a motion for a resolution in the Folketing on the principles to be applied to a more precise formulation of the youth guarantee and the introduction of a **Bill on the youth guarantee** based on experience gained in two regional pilot projects.<sup>15</sup> To implement the first stage of this programme, the Government introduced in March 1982 **five Bills** and proposals for appropriations – known as the 'March package' – concerning 'youth guidance, job creation, a job offer scheme, apprenticeships and training places and employment promoting measures in the municipalities'.<sup>16</sup> To facilitate the transition from school to working life, the municipalities will be required to offer young people guidance on training and employment opportunities. Provision is also made for increasing the availability of basic vocational training (EFG courses). 'The Government's proposal envisages the establishment of an additional number of 1 400 places in 1982 and a total number of places of 4 600 in 1983'.<sup>17</sup> **The Bill on training**



places provides for the creation of additional places in the private sector through the subsidization of firms, seeks the creation of further places in the public sector and calls for an increase in vocational training courses (p. 74). For the 'residual group' of young unemployed people plans are being made for combined training and production programmes, differing from traditional forms of training 'in that a number of training courses with a practical bias will be held. Practical activities must be seen as part of the instruction and so organized that they motivate the participants to attend the theoretical parts of the programme'.<sup>18</sup>

## Federal Republic of Germany

The vocational training system in the Federal Republic of Germany is governed by the Vocational Training Act of 14 August 1969, the Education Acts of the *Länder*, the Crafts Code and the training regulations issued pursuant to this legislation. The general view is that the dual structure of the system largely complies with the alternance concept. There is a danger, however, that 'a persistent shortage of training places . . . may make vocational training by the dual system less attractive in the long term'.<sup>19</sup> A number of measures have been taken by the Government to increase the number of training places and improve the quality of vocational training. The Federal Ministry of Education and Science assists training centres set up by groups of firms,<sup>20</sup> which supplement on- and off-the-job training and thus both pave the way for additional training places by permitting specialist firms unable to provide the required full range of training to participate in the training of young people and contribute to the improvement of the region's economic structure.

In some *Länder* young people who do not opt for training on the completion of their compulsory education are required to undergo a year of basic vocational training. The first year of vocational training is increasingly taking the form of the basic vocational training year entailing the full-time attendance of a school or a combination of on- and off-the-job training designed to provide a basic training in a wide range of skills.

For the target group consisting of young people at a particular disadvantage – girls, young foreigners and the handicapped –

There are a number of special schemes. To combat the specific causes of the disadvantages to which young women are exposed, the Federal Government has introduced measures which provide for an improvement in vocational guidance and the establishment of a programme of pilot projects, under which some 1 100 young women are being trained in over 50 industrial/technical occupations.<sup>21</sup> The programme for the promotion of the vocational training of disadvantaged young people which began in the autumn of 1980 has been expanded. In 1980/81 2 000 special school pupils, school-leavers without certificates, socially disadvantaged young people and young foreigners who had been unable to find training places despite their participation in a vocational preparation scheme were found training places under this programme. The 'Schemes for the vocational preparation and social integration of young foreigners (MBSE)' introduced in 1980 are jointly financed by the Federal Employment Institution, the *Länder* and the Federal Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. In 1981/82 some 15 000 young people participated in this off-the-job vocational preparation scheme. 'For the planned accelerated increase in the number of group training centres, the training of disadvantaged young people and assistance with the education and training of unemployed young people and additional DM 400m will be made available from 1982 to 1985'.<sup>22</sup>

## France

In France fresh foundations for alternance training were laid by Act No 80 – 526 of 12 July 1980.<sup>23</sup> The Act provides for a combination of general and technical training in public or private training centres with the acquisition of practical knowledge in private firms, the public service or non-profit institutions. 'This training is designed either for people undergoing vocational training or for wage-earners with employment contracts entitling them to vocational training. The goal is the acquisition of a qualification or preparation or retraining for a job' (article 1). A distinction is made between two forms of alternance training: 1) six-month practical training courses which include theoretical instruction and 2) vocational training under contracts of employment for employees who are over 23 years of age or have been employed for less than two years in the preceding five years provided

that a qualification is acquired on the completion of the training (Article 20). These special employment contracts have a life of between six months and two – or in exceptional cases three – years (Article 21). The cost of the schemes for which the Act provides is met from the 0.6% training levy on wages and salaries (Article 26). The goals pursued by the Act have been supplemented and detailed in regulations and circulars. The schemes being implemented under the Act are based on the report by Professor Schwartz<sup>24</sup>, which recommends alternance training as the most suitable pedagogical instrument for the vocational and social integration of young people (pp. 31 ff.). The object of the present reform of the training and employment of young people aged 16 to 18 is to help this age group with advice, information and guidance, alternance training and special integration courses. **Regulation No 82 – 273** of 26 March 1982 thus states: 'With this regulation, which is designed to ensure that young people aged 16 to 18 acquire occupational skills, the Government seeks to lay the legislative foundations for the first stage of an ambitious programme culminating in 1985 in a situation in which no young person of this age enters the labour market unless he has had vocational training leading to the award of a certificate'.<sup>25</sup> In the first year some 100 000 young people who have left school without a vocational qualification, are not already being trained and are unemployed will take a course of alternance training. The training will last for six months to two years, 30% of the time being spent in on-the-job training.<sup>26</sup> During this period the young people concerned will be covered by social insurance and receive a flat-rate allowance. To this end, the prefect of a region and the training organizations will conclude a contract requiring the latter to plan the training in coordination with other organizations, to find firms suitable for training purposes and to inform the young people regularly of job vacancies. As a supplementary measure, to ensure vocational and social integration, guidance centres (*permanences locales*) will be set up at municipal level and larger information centres (*missions locales*) installed in regions where youth unemployment is particularly high.<sup>27</sup> The general principles of alternance training also govern the schemes for the social reintegration of disadvantaged young people aged from 16 to 18.<sup>28</sup> The integration courses of vocational preparation introduced for this purpose last a maximum of 10 months.

## Italy

Legislation in Italy first took account of principles underlying alternance training in **Act No 285** of 1 July 1977 to combat youth unemployment,<sup>29</sup> under which young people aged from 15 to 26 and employers can conclude training or employment contracts (40 hours a week for two years) providing for 20 hours of work a week and 20 hours of work-related training in an establishment run by the region or in a firm authorized by the region. This arrangement was modified by **Act No 479** of 4 August 1978, which requires the young people concerned to take 600 hours of theoretical training a year, thus doing away with the stipulated number of hours of theoretical training a week. The Act also permits the regions to conclude special agreements with firms governing the organization of on-the-job training for a period of six months. A comprehensive framework for a closer link between vocational training and employment is provided by **Act No 845** of 21 December 1978.<sup>30</sup> This Act draws on the experience gained in pilot alternance training projects proposed by the Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori (Isfol) since 1975, some of which have been implemented with help from the European Social Fund (Southern Italy project 1975–1977; alternance project in Liguria). Act No 845 converts basic vocational training into short modules of no more than 600 hours a year. Like Act No 479, it also permits the regions to come to special arrangements with firms on training courses (practical training in firms). The Act requires the regions to devise schemes for the theoretical and practical training of apprentices, the firm being regarded as a place of training. The new legislation also concerns the financing of the regional vocational training system, the employees' vocational training fund being replaced with a community fund and a rotation fund, and also the division of powers, regional off-the-job training at the vocational training centres now being exclusively the responsibility of the regions, which also have the task of enforcing the legislation on vocational training. Act No 845 forms part of a – not yet completed – general reform which also extends to secondary education and placement (Acts No 760 and No 1602).

## Ireland

In Ireland the training of apprentices in recognized training occupations is organ-

ized by the Industrial Training Authority (AnCO), which was set up under the 1967 Industrial Training Act. Apprentices receive practical training on the job combined with day-release instruction at vocational schools, the first year of an apprenticeship being spent off the job at an industrial training centre. Since 1977 young people have been able to attend vocational preparation courses consisting of three parts: general training, work experience in firms and technical training.<sup>31</sup>

## Luxembourg

In Luxembourg vocational training, technical instruction at secondary schools and advanced vocational training are governed by the **Act of 21 May 1979**. This provides for a vocational training system in which an apprenticeship consists of practical, on-the-job training and the simultaneous attendance of vocational training courses at a secondary technical school. Training is divided into five main areas – the crafts, industry, trade, catering/waiting and agriculture – with two training streams in each. The Act seeks to combine all the present training systems to form a uniform system by serving as the common legislative basis for the various vocational training institutions. The efforts to achieve standardization led to the adoption of two Grand Ducal Regulations on 15 June 1979 reforming training in occupations in the trade and catering sectors and bringing it into line with the provisions of the **Grand Ducal Regulation of 25 August 1978** governing training in industrial occupations.<sup>32</sup>

## The Netherlands

Vocational training in the Netherlands is based on the **Apprentices Act**, which entered into force in 1968 and refers to an interrelationship between practical training and off-the-job instruction. Since then, efforts have been made to reform at least part of the traditional system of training. As some young people found that the certificates they were awarded on the completion of the first level of secondary education did not give them access to courses of post-secondary education or training courses, 'short courses of vocational training at upper secondary level' (kmbo) were introduced as an experiment for young people

from 16 to 18, a start being made with 21 pilot projects on 1 August 1979. This new form of instruction 'will be governed by the decree on experiments conducted by schools in the new form of follow-up/vocational instruction [Official Journal No 285/1980] . . . until further notice'.<sup>33</sup> The courses, which normally last two years or 'a maximum of three years, prepare participants for an occupation, for possible participation in post-secondary education – including advanced vocational training and applied forms of vocational training at upper secondary level – and for their role in society'.<sup>34</sup> This form of instruction is based on the methods and didactic principles of 'learning by participating', in which a link is forged between education and practical experience. The intention is to implement this programme throughout the country.

## United Kingdom

The United Kingdom's Manpower Services Commission (MSC) published a paper in May 1981 setting out the basic objectives of a comprehensive **vocational training policy for the 1980s**: '1. We must develop skill training including apprenticeships in such a way as to enable young people entering at different ages and with different educational attainments to acquire agreed standards of skill appropriate to the jobs available and to provide them with a basis for progression through further learning; 2. we must move towards a position where all young people under the age of 18 have the opportunity either of continuing in full-time education or of entering training or a period of planned work experience combining work-related training and education'.<sup>35</sup> The same goals are referred to in the Government's White Paper of December 1981, which proposes that £1000 m should be spent on a **Youth Training Scheme** to enable all unemployed school-leavers to attend an introductory course of vocational training from September 1983.<sup>36</sup> 'That training should be of a high quality and most training courses should last a year including a minimum of three months' off-the-job training and/or relevant further education. Other young people under 18 who leave school or further education and become unemployed within 12 months of leaving should be eligible for similar training but not guaranteed a place'.<sup>37</sup> The 1982 report by the Youth Task Group, which is composed of employers,

trade union and government representatives, makes practical proposals for the implementation of the new training initiative: *'We . . . recommend that a start should be made by initially providing opportunities for all 16 year-olds who have left full-time education for work and for those leaving full-time education aged 17 who become unemployed within the first year of leaving. . . . From the outset there will be included within the scheme a guarantee of an early offer of an opportunity of training to all minimum-age school leavers who are unemployed during their first year after leaving school. In achieving this guarantee the scheme will aim to provide places for 16 year-olds in jobs as well'*.<sup>38</sup> This new youth training programme *'is designed to cover both employed and unemployed young people, including those who are undergoing the first year of apprenticeship and also other existing training . . .'*<sup>39</sup> With the exception of a modified **Training for Skills Programme**, this would supersede all existing MSC schemes: the **Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP)**, introduced on 1 April 1978 with the object of offering unemployed young people of 16 and 17 work experience and vocational preparation, and the measures taken under the **Unified Vocational Preparation (UVP)** scheme, which was aimed at 16- to 18-year-olds taking jobs after little or no systematic training. The current youth training programme also draws on the experience gained and knowledge acquired from YOP and UVP.

## Greece

In Greece the employment administration (OAED) encourages vocational training of

the alternance type at over 45 OAED training centres. The young people who take these courses spend seven hours a day in on-the-job training in firms considered suitable by OAED and then three hours at the OAED's training centres, where they receive practical and theoretical instruction. Courses last three years and conclude with a recognized examination. In addition, the Cultural Affairs Ministry has been implementing pilot projects since 1981 with the assistance of the European Community.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 1, 3 January 1980.

<sup>2</sup> European Parliament, Working Documents 1980-1981; 13 October 1980, Doc. 1-460/80 (PE 64.978/fin.).

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 77, 6 April 1981.

<sup>4</sup> COM(80) 186 final.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 168, 8 July 1980.

<sup>6</sup> European Parliament, Working Documents 1980-1981; 22 July 1981, Doc. 1-365/81 (PE 72.940 fin.).

<sup>7</sup> OJ C 260, 12 October 1981.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 205, 11 August 1980.

<sup>9</sup> COM(82) 485 final.

<sup>10</sup> For schemes for young people receiving assistance from the European Social Fund in the 1980 financial year see Ninth Report on the Activities of the European Social Fund, COM(81) 343 final, and Supplement to the Report on the Activities of the European Social Fund: National Reports, COM(82) 211 final.

<sup>11</sup> COM(82) 637 final.

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<sup>19</sup> The Federal Minister of Education and Science, Vocational Training Report 1982, Bonn 1982, p. 8.

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<sup>22</sup> Conclusions drawn by the Federal Government in its Deliberations on the Vocational Training Report 1982 during the Cabinet Meeting of 1 March 1982, in: Vocational Training Report 1982, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Loi No 80-526 du 12 juillet 1980 relative aux formations professionnelles alternées en concertation avec les milieux professionnels, in: Centre Inffo, Points de repères sur l'alternance, August 1980.

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<sup>26</sup> Circular issued by the Minister for Vocational Training, in: Inffo Flash No 139, 26 April 1982, pp. IX-XII.

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<sup>29</sup> Youth Employment Measures (Act No 285 of 1 July 1977).

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<sup>32</sup> Act of 21 May 1979; Grand Ducal Regulations of 15 June 1979 (reforms of training in commercial occupations and for cooks and waiters).

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### **Economia, istruzione e formazione professionale**

*Centro Studi di Politica Economica, quarterly journal, pub. La Nuova Italia, Florence, Italy*

The present editors of this journal, which came into being in 1978, are Bruno Contini and Luisa La Malfa Calogero. It has an impressive editorial team and technical/scientific committee, whose large membership includes many experts and specialists of long-standing national and international repute. Apart from the editors, we should mention Sergio Bruno and Daniela Telmon, Ornella Ligori and Alberto Zevi, although we could list many more.

Echoing the *leitmotif* of this issue of our own journal, issue 15 (July/September 1981) of *Economia, istruzione e formazione professionale* takes alternance as its theme. We were attracted by Antonio Polimene's article on 'alternance training: reflections on in-company work experience', and Serafino Negrelli's contribution on 'the problems raised for business by vocational training: a critical review and proposals'. Both are interesting and deserve to be read by anyone wishing to keep abreast of Italian progress with the application of the principle of alternance to vocational training. (It should be borne in mind that the legislation dealing with this subject in greatest detail is relatively recent; Law 845 was enacted in December 1978.)

The journal is remarkable as a whole, and particularly for the intelligent way it is structured. Following an editorial and a number of articles on general vocational training and education matters, special sections are devoted to financial aspects ('public administration'), scientific subjects ('essays and research') and theory ('research and documentation materials'). The non-Italian reader will find the summaries in English of the most significant articles in the review helpful. The journal is available in bookshops or by subscription (La Nuova Italia, Casella postale 183, 50100 Florence.)

### **Formazione e lavoro**

*Enaip (Ente Nazionale ACLI Istruzione Professionale), quarterly journal, Viale Trastevere 221, 00153 Rome, Italy*

Launched in 1970, the journal is edited by Domenico Rosati (editor in charge, Lino Bosio). Its editorial committee is a distinguished body of specialists in training and work in Italy and the Community, for instance Gennaro Acquaviva, Giovanni Ascani, Manuel Gutierrez, Vincenzo Reginato, Alberto Valentini (co-editor) and Leonardo Verdi-Vighetti. We have selected issue 95 (November 1980) of this journal for the same reasons that decided our choice of the other publications reviewed: it takes alternance as its theme, in this case 'alternance: vocational training and work'. The editorial for this issue is by Lino Bosio. The publication is in two main sections, 'Research' and 'Enclosures'. All the features in the 'research' section (based on numerous interviews written up by an *ad hoc* research team) were planned and reviewed by a committee of experts consisting of Mario Gilli, Manuel Gutierrez and Alberto Valentini. The 'enclosures' are particularly useful as supporting material for the discussions and conclusions. They include the text of Italian legislation on the subjects in question, plus an interesting addendum ('additional statistics') that helps us to understand the extent and scale of practical applications by the Italian regions and the training courses set up in Italy in the late 1970s.

With its impeccable editorial control and typography, the publication is a useful guide to enquirers about the vocational training situation and developments in Italy.

### **Formazione domani**

*the monthly journal for IAL (the CISL Istituto Addestramento Lavoratori), Via Tagliamento 39, 00198 Rome, Italy*

This journal is edited by Lorenzo Rota and an editorial committee that also includes Giovanni Bresciani, Enrico Giacinto, Gilberto Iaverone, Elvira Pascale, Maurizio Polverari and Pierantonio Varesi.

*Formazione domani* was founded in 1972. The issue reviewed (No 99, September 1980) contains a translation of the paper read by Burkart Sellin (an expert working within Cedefop) to the conference on alternance and youth unemployment in the EEC organized by Cedefop in Berlin on 25–27 June 1980. Its title is 'Alternance training and employment policy for young people'.

The journal has traditionally been divided into sections: editorial, study and work, research and regions. The last section, European fact sheets, should help to arouse the interest of Italian readers in the European context of alternance training and its achievements. In this issue, for example, the second part of the investigative section is on the 'approximation of training levels', the subject of one of our own issues (No 10, December 1982). As is evident, the theme is unfortunately as urgent and topical as ever.

Easy to read and up-to-the-minute, *Formazione domani* may be found helpful by the interested European reader as well as the Italian public.

### **L'école et l'entreprise. L'expérience des deux Allemagne**

*Lucie Tanguy, Annick Kieffer, publ. La Documentation française, Paris 1982, 170 pp. (French)*

This volume in the *Notes et études documentaires* collection (of about 50 publications a year produced for the *Secrétariat général du Gouvernement – Direction de la documentation française*) takes as its theme the German dual training system, dividing it into two sections, one on the Federal Republic and one on German Democratic Republic. In France, since critics of the traditional vocational training structures first created a stir in the early 1970s, there has been growing interest in information and research on other countries' training systems.

The focus of this particular investigation by two experts is the alternance training imparted, with certain variations, both in the Federal Republic on France's border and in the German Democratic Republic.

The publication starts with a brief but essential glossary of the technical terms used in the two German vocational training and education systems, with French renderings. In the introduction, the authors explain the ideas that led them to take a searching look at the problems associated with their subject. The facts and figures that they review and set out in both diachronic and synchronic form are extremely useful in that they shed light on the long (and as yet unfinished) history of changes in vocational training in France, where the forerunners to alternance were established in the period 1960–1972 and alternance itself developed mainly between 1972 and 1980.

After describing their conclusions regarding this process, in the sections devoted to alternance in the two Germanies the authors draw a clear, comprehensive picture of the varied situations there, which will undoubtedly clarify the difficult subjects discussed in the minds of European readers.

## Education et alternance

A miscellany of research reports (compiled by A. Bercovitz, introduction by M. Leane) that have appeared in the collection entitled *Théories et pratiques de l'éducation permanente*, published by the 'Ligue française de l'Enseignement et de l'Éducation permanente', in conjunction with the 'Centre National des Lettres', Condé-sur-Noireau, 1982, 287 pp. (French)

This miscellany is in two parts. Part one is devoted to general issues associated with alternance and to what has been achieved in certain French departments. School and workplace, basic education and recurring education, the training of trainers and social advancement, safeguarding the interests of private and public sector concerns: this is the wide spectrum it covers.

The second part is briefer, setting out and summarizing the views held on alternance. It offers a pocket sociolinguistic history of an ever fashionable concept (not just a word) (v. 'Le furet de l'alternance' by G. Girod de l'Ain) and provides general information and comment on alternance policies, measures and teaching methods in the French vocational training system.

Fully documented with the latest information, this publication is also remarkable for its useful bibliography of French-language publications (produced by Francine Vincent), divided into various sections: legislative and legal aspects; alternance and the education system; alternance and pedagogy; the experience of alternance training; alternance and employment; and the views of the two sides of industry on alternance.

A work of reference and, in certain sections, a good read in itself, we feel that this publication is the most up-to-date contribution to an overview of alternance in France.

## Alternance training for young people: guidelines for action

Jean-Pierre Jallade

pub. Cedefop, Berlin 1982, 99 pp.

The author is the director of the *European Cultural Foundation's Education Institute* and is familiar not only to the readers of our journal (8/1982, p. 30) but also to a wider European public.

As Roger Faist says in his preface, this work is based on the findings of a conference jointly promoted by the Commission of the European Communities and Cedefop in June 1980. It devotes special attention to new developments and achievements within the Member States. As a result of the current employment situation and the pressure of technological innovation, alternance training is continuing to prove its worth, offering young people an opportunity to acquire a more flexible job profile better suited to the needs of today.

As the author points out in the introduction, the publication is intended for institutions, politicians, decision-makers, trainers and trainees. We feel that his lucid analysis will be extremely useful, even essential, reading for the latter two groups in particular.

Divided into seven chapters, with its well planned typographical layout, the report holds the attention even of readers who are not specialists in the subjects under discussion. The illustrations, diagrams and tables enliven the text and make it easier to grasp.

A brief introduction, printed in red, precedes each chapter. Originally in French

and translated into the five other Community languages (but not Greek), the publication should reach the very wide audience of those concerned with the problems it tackles.

## The Interaction between Education and Productive Work

edited by A. Pain (Centres d'Études Sociologiques, Paris), pub. in 'Educational Documentation and Information', Unesco, Paris-Geneva, 1982 (4th quarter, No 225), 109 pp. (EN)

The theme of the fourth quarterly bulletin of Unesco's International Bureau of Education was inspired by the 38th session of the *International Conference on Education* (ICE, November 1981, Geneva). The conference had provided material for a study of the interaction between education and productive work that was to be embodied in Recommendation 73 to the Ministers of Education of all Unesco Member States.

Following a brief introduction and the text of the Recommendation, there is a selective annotated bibliography of no fewer than 326 publications on the subject. This 'catalogue raisonné' is in four parts, only the first of which was distributed to those attending the conference as preliminary guidelines (66 titles). The remaining 260 bibliographical references are annotated and grouped under three headings: Education and Productive Work; Education in Productive Work; and Practical Experiments.

It is this painstaking work of world-wide bibliographical research and the concise comments, on each title that make this publication so invaluable in offering support and guidance to the decision-makers: politicians, experts and practitioners.

## Foundation Training Issues — Report prepared at the Request of the Manpower Services Commission

Christopher Hayes et al.

pub. IMS (Institute of Manpower Studies), Brighton 1982, 170 pp. (English).

In May 1981, the Manpower Services Commission published *A New Training Initia-*

*tive*, which recommended that all under-18s in Britain should be able to continue their education or training (whether or not it had been interrupted) in a school and a firm (alternance), for the purpose of self-betterment in their working lives and attendance of adult education courses. MSC then commissioned IMS to produce a report on the how these needs might be met. In the space of four months, this report was brought out by six authors. They review the factors typical of alternance training, the way in which they interact and their influence on possible solutions, discussing issues such as the concerns of the two sides of industry, training traditions, current trends, practical aspects of improving the quality of training, teaching goals, regulations, interim reports on the goals that have been attained, vocational guidance, length of training, local labour markets, the role of HM Inspectors in the State system and legislation.

The term 'traineeship' is used for the alternance training discussed here, which is seen as including job experience, school education and in-house training. It is designed for over-16s not attending schools or training establishments full time who have not had systematic vocational training, most of whom are destined to unemployment. After describing the situation, the authors bring the problem to public attention and suggest possible solutions.

## **Interdependenz von Lernort-Kombinationen und Output-Qualitäten betrieblicher Berufsausbildung in ausgewählten Berufen**

Münch/Müller/Oesterle/Scholz

pub. Erich Schmidt, Berlin 1981, 812 pp. (DE)

This weighty report, embodying the authors' empirical and analytical research, examines the locations and curricula of in-company vocational training: it does not cover training in the school, partly for reasons of space but mainly because it is not included in the research assumptions. In general, there are three types of vocational training of this kind: traineeship jobs, laboratories or workshops for apprentices and in-company instruction. Taking as its starting point the hypothesis that the location and timing of training (and their combination) are related to the concrete results of training, seven trades were surveyed: engi-

neering fitter, electrical installer, electronic technician for energy plant, printer, optician, librarian and clerical worker in industry. At the end of the third part, following a detailed review of the main findings (pp. 596–612), the research conclusions and the essential points are set out more succinctly (pp. 613–618).

It is of interest that training results are not greatly influenced by the structures associated with the location and timing of training, although the nature of the training itself obviously differs greatly from one trade to another. The research findings cannot be used to corroborate the contention of either party – those who argue that vocational training should be part of schooling or the advocates of training on the job. The quality of training can be improved only by giving careful thought as to the conditions specific to each individual calling and modifying and/or adapting the combination of training locations.

The report based on the extensive research, conducted on scientific lines, contains tables, illustrations and a bibliography of the subject (pp. 668–671) and an explanation of the technical terms that occur most frequently (pp. 698–671) and the terminology employed in the survey questionnaires (pp. 806–811).

## **Beschreibung der Berufsbildungssysteme in den Mitgliedsstaaten der Europäischen Gemeinschaft – Vergleichende Studie ('Guide')**

pub. by Cedefop, Berlin 1982, 475 pp. (DE)

As Roger Faist points out in his introductory note to the reader, the preparation and drafting of this comparative study of vocational training systems in the EEC Member States have been protracted and beset with difficulties. Apart from the technical problems that arose in describing the systems in the nine States (the deadline for their submission was November 1980, which meant that the Greek system had to be left out for the time being) and the volume of the descriptions submitted (in the end each one had to be limited to a maximum of 50 pages), the greatest challenge was the need to offer advice and guidance on the (very desirable) harmonization of those systems. This task of 'squaring the circle' was tackled

by the editorial committee, which set out its proposals in the introductory chapter (pp. 13–56) to make it easier for the reader to relate each of the nine sections to the others. The task was complicated by the fact that, during the gestation and compilation of the national monographs, vocational training had been developing and improving, whereas the State school systems had remained relatively static.

As the editors point out in their foreword, the same structure is used for the nine descriptions: demographic, socio-cultural, historical, legal and economic factors. Even though individual national systems have many unique features and are not altogether comparable, through their ingenious use of layout (summary tables, graphs, colours, etc.) as well as their introductory comments, the authors have succeeded in putting together a readable, interesting survey of a subject of great importance to the harmonization of school education and vocational training policies at Community level, a need that is growing in urgency. For the time being the publication is available only in German, but it is being translated into the six other official Community languages.

## **Berufsbildung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland**

Reinhard Zedler

Deutscher Instituts-Verlag, Cologne 1982, 56 pp., (in the series entitled *Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftspolitische Grundinformationen – Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Schule-Wirtschaft*) (DE)

This booklet is a clear and up-to-date guide to young people (and their parents) faced with having to choose a career. The author discusses the opportunities for vocational training for school-leavers in the Federal Republic and reviews the systems in other EEC Member States. In Chapter 4, he describes vocational training in Germany's dual system. From the legal viewpoint, he explains the difference between vocational institutes and schools (administered by the State) and training in private sector companies (controlled by the Chambers of Commerce). Educationally, practical training on the job cannot be separated from purely theoretical learning in the school: the former is inconceivable without appro-

priate theoretical grounding and the latter is pointless unless it is linked with practical work. Firms are clearly better able to pass on skills and knowledge related to new machines than the school, whereas the school has the advantage of a pre-systemat-

ic, overall approach in conveying general theory. The only criticism made by the author is the lack of coordination between in-company training programmes and the school curriculum. He goes on to describe various types of schools and vocational

training and adult training establishments. With its essential bibliography of the subjects discussed, diagrams and summary tables, the booklet is a quick and easy guide to vocational training in the Federal Republic.



## A new concept of partnership\*

*Hywel Ceri Jones*

Director, Education, Vocational Training and Youth Policy Commission of the European Communities

*Mr Jones, as Director in charge of education and training issues, could you tell me what is the present position of the Commission regarding alternance training?*

As you know, the term was coined in the late 1970s – and I think it was a useful term at the time – to suggest the idea of a liaison between the worlds of education and training on the one side and the world of work on the other. But, it was coined at a time when, on the whole, the responses to the youth unemployment crisis (because it arose mainly in the context of youth unemployment) were really very short-term, *ad hoc* responses. Most countries now have moved on a stage from that and are interested in much longer-term solutions if they can find them. This is also the thinking behind the Commission's proposals for the so-called 'social guarantee' for young people.

*What are then the new developments?*

I tend to think of it now in three stages.

Stage 1 is not exactly alternance in my opinion, but nevertheless it is the idea of a partnership between schools and the outside world. Its aim is to answer the question of what should happen in the final period of compulsory education, where there is a need for much more openness on the part of schools to relations with the world outside, so that young people, particularly the less

qualified, have a really good comprehensive view of the opportunities and services that are available in their local community.

Then, there is stage 2, which is at the heart of the Commission's proposals: what is going to happen to people (broadly) in the 16 to 18 age group? And, there, on the whole, I do not think that the old idea of linked work and training – which is the official, and rather unsatisfactory definition – is necessarily very helpful for the long-term unemployed young school-leaver. What we are proposing is a one-year foundation period of a very broadly based kind, concentrating on giving them social skills and self-confidence, rather than technical and job-oriented skills, but at the same time, giving them some experience of work and some practical skills. Whether you would call that linked work and training, I am not sure, but it is still the idea of building bridges between education, training and work.

*But how do you intend to build a bridge between the world of school, which most of them have rejected and the world of work, where they are unlikely to find a job? Will you not have the impression of bridging two worlds with negative connotations?*

I had not, in fact, assumed that the foundation year after the end of compulsory schooling would be spent in the school which most of them have rejected and left. It could take place in any one of a number of different locations. I think one has to be

very flexible about that in relation to local situations and to the ideas and needs of young people themselves. In general, I see it as a break with the period of compulsory schooling but, nevertheless, a period of fairly general education and redevelopment. Many young people in quite a number of Member States lack the very basic skills necessary for access to vocational training and to jobs. And I am not one of those who believes that such a period, if it does not end up immediately in a job, is a period badly spent.

*Do you mean that it is better than being on the streets?*

That is a very negative way of saying something very positive. I think one has to take a long-term view about this, and I am sure that if one can here create new kinds of self-confidence and personal resources in young people, then they will find solutions themselves. These may not be in the traditional sense of paid employment, but young people might create their own projects, create their own types of activities, and I think one has to see this idea as part of the response to the expectation of continuing high unemployment. I have no doubt that much of the political interest in youth training stems from the desire to reduce youth unemployment. I see nothing wrong in that. Youth unemployment is a disaster for the individual and for the community as a whole. Youth training programmes can be

\* Interview conducted in March 1983 by F. Morgan-Gérard.



a constructive alternative to idleness. Our task is twofold. Firstly, we must all be honest with young people, so that we do not encourage expectations which the current depressed labour market cannot fulfil. And secondly, we must do everything possible to fill youth training programmes with high-quality content, offering the comprehensive, and systematic preparation for adult and working life. If we do that, even if young people cannot move into jobs immediately on leaving the programme we propose, they will have gained invaluable skills, knowledge and experience.

*And what about stage 3 of the Commission's proposal?*

The third phase concerns the 18 to 25 age group, for whom we have put forward proposals for the equivalent of a one-year training period, which is flexible in that it may be spent in different units and at different times within that age range.

*A credit for later . . .*

Yes, and we see this stage as being much more about vocational training, much more job-specific, acquiring real qualifications, although the foundation period would also, I hope, provide young people with the basis for access to the mainstream of qualifications.

*But would this provide them also with the certificates often required on the labour market? Would they end up not only with the qualification but also with a recognized 'piece of paper'?*

Yes, it could give them a piece of paper, and the Commission feels it should. Because if it does not enable them to have access to the mainstream of qualifications, then it would be second class, and be seen to be second class by young people. And one of the things which is quite striking from the research that I have been looking at over the last few years, is that young people, who are often presented as being demotivated are not demotivated at all. They know exactly what is being offered to them, they know its strengths and weaknesses, and they are not prepared to be tricked. The evidence is clear that young people want to work and they recognize the need to acquire the necessary qualifications and competences, though it is true also that this disillusionment can set in when training does not lead directly to a job. But just to go back to the third phase, I see this as a much more job-specific type of training, linked with employment. This

could mean, for those who are unemployed, a better bridge into work experience of a very specific kind, and for those young people who are in employment, a much more organized opportunity for them to spend periods outside their workplace gaining general skills, particularly skills which will enable them to cope with technological change.

This double-barrelled proposal of a one-year foundation period (broadly 16 to 18), followed by the equivalent of one year's training (to be taken flexibly between the age of 18 and 25), would transform the expectations of young people as to what is possible at the start of their working life.

*Do you really think that it will be possible to integrate such a flexible approach into the very rigid training systems and structures of most Member States?*

Yes, I do think it possible. Let us take Germany as an example. The fact is that because of the unemployment crisis, the capacity of the traditional system – the 'dual system' – to cater with the new situation in Germany is being sorely tested. Because of the pressures, I think there will be a new openness about creating different kinds of provisions, which do not confine young people to one route only. And I think that the idea of alternance, if you apply it to the three stages I have been describing, implies a new concept of partnership: partnership between education and training authorities, between education and training and the world of employment, between the world of employment and people in local society, voluntary groups, etc. – all of which represent new challenges.

The Commission's proposals, as you know, are very much focused on supporting initiatives at local level. It seems to us that it is there, at the very grass roots, that it is possible for these new partnerships to cut across a lot of the organizational and jurisdictional barriers which so often stifle initiative, and which are much more difficult to get around at national level. That is where the emphasis is in the proposals we presented linked to the proposed reform of the European Social Fund.

*You mentioned the Commission's support, what does this mean in financial terms?*

We have put forward proposals in the communication on vocational training policies for the 1980s, which will be decided on by the joint Labour and Education Council at the beginning of June. I very much hope

that they will then agree not only on a set of policy measures but on a five-year programme of experimentation and of pooling of experience, which could be made possible through the interventions of the Social Fund . . .

*The new Social Fund, after it has been revised?*

Yes: the Social Fund, existing or revised, with this project as a very essential priority area for development, but with great emphasis on exploiting and disseminating systematically the results of the experimentation.

*Will you find trainers already prepared for this kind of approach?*

Clearly we need trainers and personnel able to develop these new partnerships, and we will need to provide them with suitable materials derived from these different experiments; and that is a great challenge for us. I could see here a role for Cedefop, in particular to convert some of the material, derived from the pooled experience, into a form which could be used by practitioners. Furthermore, the strategy I have outlined will require quite new ways of working from all involved in education and training; and an inter-disciplinary approach will be essential, in which people from a range of professional backgrounds cooperate in helping young people to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience they need for adult and working life.

*In practical terms, how are you going to proceed? Will you run pilot projects? Will the European Social Fund continue only to reimburse the Member States for their own operations, or will it finance projects initiated and coordinated by the Commission?*

The proposals for the reform of the Social Fund incorporate the idea for the first time of a much enlarged section of the Fund to be set aside for policy experimentation – mainly in relation to Community action programmes such as those proposed by the Commission in its recent communications on vocational training – the so-called 'Richard 10 % proposal'. What is proposed in the communication on training policy is that some part of the Fund should focus on the problems we have been discussing in relation to young people:

- (i) with a network of projects concerned with 'alternance' applied in this new perspective,

# Europe

- (ii) with experiments related to improving the basic skills of adults,
- (iii) with projects looking at new types of training/production schemes,
- (iv) with a number of pilot experiments aiming at increasing the participation of women in this whole development.

Everything depends on what happens in June when the Council discusses the

training proposals and the reform of the European Social Fund.

*Are you optimistic?*

It is certainly encouraging to see, from our analysis of the implementation of the alternance resolution, adopted in 1979, that most countries have been making a move in this direction.

*Ten different moves?*

Yes, but I am not unhappy about that. I

think that variety is the spice of life, and, in any case, what has been done is still on a very small scale. So there is a big quantity problem and, I think, a huge quality problem about expanding the application of this idea of a 'new partnership' – I prefer this word now to that of 'alternance'. But if we get the go-ahead from the governments in June, I believe that there is more than enough energy, enthusiasm and expertise to make these ideas a reality.

# The development of alternance training for young people in the European Community

*Burkart Sellin*

## Introduction

The aim of this report is to provide information on:

- the level of development of alternance training in the individual Member States and in the European Community as a whole;

- the kind and extent of support given by Cedefop to the Member States between approval of the Council's Resolution of 18. 12. 1979\* and approximately the end of 1982;

and to propose decision-making aids on:

- further possible steps to develop and implement fully the concept of alternance training for young people during the transition from school to working life.

The need for the renewal and extension of vocational training became obvious especially in times of growing economic and employment difficulties of more and more youngsters, male and female, in all Member States of the European Community. The linking of education, training and work experience (alternance training) at post-compulsory level has been regarded as a means to extend such provision and to orient it more towards young people's and employees' needs and aspirations. Deficits in training provision already existed during periods of full employment, but they were concealed by the fact that every school leaver obtained a job irrespective of his vocational skill. As this is no longer the case and against the background of socio-economically and technologically induced struc-

tural change, which is threatening in particular unskilled and semi-skilled labour in manufacturing and office occupations, the political will to improve the transition from education and training to employment while at the same time imparting recognized skills and qualifications was stressed by all parties concerned. Furthermore, it was expected that the concept of alternance training could help those young people to obtain recognized skills who, in the full-time school system, traditionally are and were the losers: children of workers' families, young foreign workers with language and cultural difficulties, young girls not permitted to pursue their education and training, socially or otherwise handicapped youngsters, etc. Their positive discrimination within alternance training provision was envisaged at the very beginning of the discussion, i.e. since 1978/79.

The aim of this report is to examine Member States' policies in order to determine whether this political will has been translated into action, or whether a new impetus is necessary in order to achieve the set objectives.

## Level of development of alternance training in the individual Member States and in the European Community as a whole

- **The concept of alternance training in accordance with the intentions of the Resolution**

It is based on 'alternation' between productive activity and on-the-job training on the

one hand and on more systematic learning in schools or training centres on the other.

The alternance or 'alternation' principle can be of use in all learning processes and at all levels in educational and training systems; in fact it has been adopted, to a certain degree, at all levels of education and training. Alternance training may also be of particular importance in the continuing training of adults.

The Council's Resolution, which was passed on the basis of a Communication from the Commission of October 1979, only concerned young people during the transition from school to work.\*\* It sought to contribute to the development of vocational training which 'would increase the chances of young people finding employment'.

The aim was to adjust vocational training systems 'to include periods, during transition to working life, in which training would be linked to the acquisition of practical working experience'.

Alternance training was found to be particularly appropriate in three situations:

- 'for young people undergoing apprenticeships or post-educational training courses;

- for young job-seekers eligible for special training measures to facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market; and for

- young workers without adequate vocational training'.\*

\* Official Journal of the European Communities No C 1 of 3 January 1980.

\*\* Official Journal of the European Communities No C 1 of 3 January 1980.

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## □ The socio-economic background to Community action

The following points in particular constituted the background to the joint effort of EC Member States:

- the steadily worsening employment situation of young people under 25 in all Community countries;
- the fact that young people with no vocational training are particularly threatened by unemployment;
- past experience which suggested that apprentice training of the traditional kind did facilitate integration into working life; other indications that apprenticeships were possibly losing in importance because of cyclical and structural changes;
- past experience drawn from the short-term measures introduced in almost all Member States between 1976 and 1979 to combat youth unemployment. These measures did help to relieve the strain on the labour market but are less and less able to provide satisfactory vocational training or permanent employment for young people.

Furthermore, the Resolution on alternance training was linked to parallel considerations concerning a redistribution of work which accorded some importance to extending vocational training provision and releasing employees for continuing education and training purposes (cf. the Council's Resolution on the redistribution of work which was passed at the same time.\*

The main issue, however, concerned the quantity and quality of post-compulsory vocational training. This left much to be desired particularly in the case of minimum age school leavers. In several Member States up to 50 percent of these school leavers could not benefit from vocational training leading to a formal qualification. At the same time demographic factors prompted a rapid increase in the demand for vocational training provision leading to a formal qualification whereas supply, particularly in the case of apprentice training, was on the decline. New target groups, for example women, girls and young migrants (the so-called second generation migrant workers) were also increasingly interested in participating in vocational training.

Short-term measures helped temporarily to increase provision, usually in the form of in-school or on-the-job vocational prepara-

tion or work experience of up to one year. However, it was clear, in spite of positive elements in this provision, that in the long run these measures would not be able to provide young people with satisfactory vocational training – and thus a good start in working life – or with permanent employment. Thus, the necessity became apparent for a quantitative extension and qualitative adjustment of vocational training systems by drawing on the vocational training concept of 'alternance training'.

## □ Alternance training and the development of training systems in the European Community

Experience gained in the training of apprentices, in particular in German-speaking countries on the one hand and in Denmark, the Netherlands and Luxembourg on the other during periods of increasingly acute employment problems among young people, seemed to indicate that systems based on alternation between school and in-firm education and work were more likely to ease the integration of young school leavers into working life than vocational training systems organized in schools only.

In alternance training exemplary learning and practical exposure to professional and social activities within the firm seem to promote a positive attitude among young people towards continuing training. Here, an important prerequisite is that the training function of firms is recognized and improved. In every form of alternance training the commitment of firms is just as important as that of young people. Where there is little or no commitment, this must be encouraged by way of special incentives or specific financing mechanisms if alternance training is to spread.

Finally, it was hoped that stronger and renewed emphasis on alternance training would have a positive effect on the contents of school programmes by facilitating the transfer of new technologies and socio-economic developments from practice to theory and vice versa.

EC Member States, in which apprentice training was less wide-spread – e.g. the United Kingdom, Ireland and Italy – or those which emphasized more the full-time system of vocational training schools for skilled white-or blue-collar workers, discovered the value of practical experience and on-the-job training in helping to ease the transition of young people. Thus, they either improved the training of apprentices

– France and Ireland – or introduced periods of practical experience and training into school-based vocational training programmes – Italy and the Netherlands.

Short-term measures, which aimed to combat youth unemployment, were followed by new forms of alternance training or vocational preparation, for example in the United Kingdom and France.

At the same time the above-mentioned countries with a more popular apprenticeship system, introduced changes designed to satisfy both the increased demand and the partly unsatisfied claims for quality by providing vocational training leading to a formal qualification and a more secure future.

They extended the school or theoretical side of apprenticeship training, e.g. by encouraging the introduction of a basic vocational training year, by extending attendance at part-time vocational schools to two days a week and/or by setting up inter-firm training centres to improve the quality of practical vocational training (Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany).

All three developments:

- the renewal of traditional apprenticeships and their extension,
- the opening of more school-oriented vocational training systems towards the working world through additional practical courses and work experience programmes, and
- the improvement of the quality of apprenticeship training by increased systematization of theoretical and practical training in the more firm-oriented training systems

may have contributed to the growing uniformness among post-school vocational training systems for young people in the European Community. The resolution of the Council may also have contributed towards this development.

## □ Remaining shortcomings

The development of vocational training systems along the lines of alternance training is still in the initial stages. Neither the alternance nor the full-time school system provides at present enough satisfactory training, in terms of quantity, for young people. In the Community average, there are still some 40 % of the age group who are leaving school with no prospect of further education or training.

\* Official Journal of the European Communities No C 1 of 3 January 1980.

All too frequently alternance training courses may not be long enough – sometimes less than one year – to enable them to provide young people with recognized skills and a qualifying training.

In times of economic recession many firms do not feel that they can invest sufficient time and money in training the younger generation of workers.

In many countries the public authorities, too, are often not prepared, in view of their budgetary situation, to provide sufficient funds for a quantitative and qualitative improvement of training for young people.

The overall economic situation in the three years which followed the Council's resolution was and is still not favourable to extensive development along alternance training lines.

Although there is increased awareness of objective needs and although more importance is now attached to economic structural problems than to cyclical ones, much ground has still to be covered before the necessary conclusions can be drawn regarding the effective development of vocational training systems. This is certainly due in particular to the financial situation of the Member States and the European Community as a whole but also to the question in many cases as yet unsolved, of the distribution of the financial burden between the State and private industry, between public and private firms. This is a very important issue in the development of alternance training.

Moreover, some Member States are certainly waiting for demographic trends in the mid-eighties to reduce the numbers of young people arriving on the labour market for the first time. It is hoped that the burden on schools and firm capacities will then be lightened which would enable them to meet the goal of and claim to 'training for all' increasingly.

#### □ Training provision for all young people?

The declaration by the Heads of State or Governments of Member States at the end of March 1982 that they would guarantee young people a two-year course of continuing training during the next five years seems to confirm this trend.

Here, alternance training could play an important role. In addition, it could be

closely linked to an employment strategy for older workers which aims to redistribute work and remove the divisions on the labour market.\*

If training, which includes alternance principles, is to be provided for all young people, then the parallel efforts concerning small and medium enterprises and cooperatives or new activities must be incorporated at an early stage into such a strategy.

Equal consideration must be given to the needs of older young people and adults who are forced by structural problems to undergo continuing training and retraining.

Despite the unfavourable economic and social conditions surrounding the development of alternance training, which is an important prerequisite to achieving the above target, major steps have been taken in this direction by nearly all Member States in recent years.

## Development in the individual Member States

### □ Federal Republic of Germany

The vocational training system in the Federal Republic of Germany covers roughly 85% of the target group stated in the resolution of the Council. It is traditionally organized in a way which includes 'alternance', linking work experience, training and education, and leading to recognized skills. At present there are some 440 recognized occupations at skilled worker and skilled employee level for which training regulations are established at Federal level. Normally, the trainees attend part-time classes in vocational schools one to two days per week; three to four days per week they undergo training at the work place and are working with an employer.

The theoretical education and training in schools is controlled by the *Länder* education authorities while the training on the premises is under the control of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce or the Chambers of Handicrafts. The chambers have a public mandate of the Federal Government to guarantee the proper execu-

\* *Divided labour market*: one section consists of stable jobs and the other of jobs which are constantly threatened by unemployment. The latter are mainly held by women, young people, migrants or older workers. Firms which are sensitive to cyclical movements and are threatened by structural changes are also included in the second category.

tion of the training regulations and to prepare and to hold final examinations in the practical skills needed for the relevant occupation.

The school authorities participate in these examinations, but in most cases the chambers and their examining bodies have the final say. This 'dual system' is sometimes lacking in coordination between the two components of alternance and, due to the absence of direct State control, there are problems regarding good quality and enough quantity in the training places offered by the firms. In recent years more and more State activities were therefore developed in addition in order to help youngsters to find adequate training places. Girls and young foreign workers especially were deprived of access to training. Moreover, a large number of young people were forced to accept training places in areas which in the long run may be threatened by weak employment perspectives.

The policy adopted in the Federal Republic of Germany last year therefore concentrated on efforts to extend training provision for young people with special difficulties and to improve the quality of the training in traditional sectors and to set up inter-firm training centres particularly for craft occupations.

In 1980 funds were made available for the first time for a Programme for 'disadvantaged persons'. Under this programme training places, partly financed by public funds, were provided in public or private institutions for young people who would not otherwise have benefited from training. The main target groups of this programme are young people with no extended school leaving certificate (Hauptschulabschluss), young migrants, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups. In 1982 this programme has funds amounting to DM 59 million at its disposal. For 1983 DM 97 million have been earmarked in the proposed budget. Moreover, the programme for the establishment of group training schemes has been allocated considerably more funds for 1982. In 1982 funds amounting to DM 230 million are to be granted to those training centres which are used jointly by several firms and were set up preferably in particularly distressed regions by Chambers of Industry and Commerce and Chambers of Handicrafts. In 1983 some DM 500 million ought to be granted. In 1983 the programme for disadvantaged persons will provide training for approximately 11 000 young people, who would

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otherwise have no prospect of undergoing training, in recognized skilled blue- or white-collar occupations, 4 500 of them in group training scheme institutions.

The *Länder* (States), not the Federal Government, are responsible for part-time and full-time vocational schools: technical vocational school, basic vocational training year and vocational preparation year (*Berufsfachschule*, *Berufsgrundbildungsjahr* und *Berufsvorbereitungsjahr*).

A number of *Länder* with large numbers of unemployed young people – for example North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Hamburg, Berlin and Hessen – have introduced compulsory attendance of the full-time basic vocational training or vocational preparation year for all young people who, upon completion of compulsory education, have neither a job nor a training place. This led to a temporary reduction of the strain on the limited supply of training places. Between 1977 and 1980 the Federal Government allocated a further DM 400 million for the creation, reorganization or extension of vocational schools. However, at present there are no plans to continue this programme.

The following table illustrates that the development of newly concluded training contracts was on the whole positive. One main objection was, however, that the additional vocational training provision was concentrated more in the weaker labour market areas of the retail trade, handicrafts and, in particular, in services areas with a mainly female workforce and less in more forward-looking industries and services sectors.

This year (1982) the situation of training provision will become more acute as demand is steadily rising and no further extension of the tenth year of compulsory education can be expected. Increasing numbers of young people from the basic vocational training year and vocational preparation year are coming into the training market.

Furthermore, since the repeal of the 1974 *Ausbildungsplatzförderungsgesetz* (Act on the Promotion of Training Places), which was declared null and void because of formal inaccuracies by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1980, there is no longer the threat of a training levy being imposed on firms by way of contribution to a central fund. This may be the reason for the decline in training places in 1981 which was even more marked in 1982.

\*The following table gives the annual proportion of new training contracts concluded with 15–16 year olds under the dual system of training.

Table 1

Year	Newly concluded training contracts up to 30 September Number	Proportion of the 15–16 age group involved Average in %
1976	499 000	50.7
1977	558 000	55.6
1978	599 400	58.2
1979	640 256	60.2
1980	649 989	62.3
1981	605 352	58.7(*)

Sources: Report on vocational training 1982, p. 6; basic and structural data from the Federal Ministry of Education and Science, 1981/82 edition, pp. 205 and 208.

\* When interpreting this figure it should be remembered that the tenth compulsory school year has been widely accepted in North Rhine-Westphalia in particular. This has led to a delay in the demand for training places.

Since 1973 data have been available on the numbers of passes in final examinations for all training sectors under the dual system.

The following table shows that between 48.7% (1973) and 55.6% (1980) of 17-18 year olds successfully completed training leading to a formal qualification under the dual system.

Table 2

Year	Passes in final examinations in thousands	Proportion of the age group 17–18 in %
1973	416.5	48.7
1974	438.3	49.7
1975	460.7	51.3
1976	477.1	51.5
1977	470.4	48.9
1978	483.6	48.7
1979	503.7	49.4
1980	567.3	55.6
1981	—	—

Source: Basic and structural data from the Federal Ministry of Education and Science, 1981/82 edition, pp. 90, 204 and 208\*.

\* Reply by the Federal Government to a question in the Bundestag: Bundestag bulletin 9/1929, p. 22.

## □ Denmark

Since 1977 special employment and vocational training programmes have been

introduced to combat youth unemployment. A decentralized system of labour market committees was supposed to provide each young person with a job or a training place. However, in spite of considerable efforts on their part, this objective was not achieved. Hence, from 1980 to 1982 efforts were made to implement a pilot project entitled 'Guarantee to young people' which aimed to provide sufficient training or employment for all young people under 25. This pilot project was initially restricted to the municipalities of Århus and Storstrøm. It concerned both young school leavers and jobless young people.

In order to be eligible for the project, school-leavers must have been unemployed for at least three months. They can only begin training on 15 January in the year which follows the completion of their education (in June of the previous year).

All other young people must have been unemployed for five months over a period of fifteen months and have been registered with the labour exchange for three months.

## ■ Countrywide realization of the 'Guarantee to young people'

On the basis of this pilot project, a general programme will perhaps be introduced throughout the country in coming years. A three-stage employment plan for all under 25s was proposed in the summer of this year and should be fully implemented by 1984. A first stage hereof has been formally adopted.

The first stage, which aims in 1982 to provide training places for an additional 23 000 young people, consists of three groups of measures:

- career guidance and vocational training for young people,
- job promotion, and
- guarantee of employment.

## ■ Career guidance and vocational training for young people

All municipalities are obliged, by law, to offer local career guidance to all school leavers within two years of completion of schooling. By the end of 1982 the capacities of the basic vocational training year (EFG) are to be increased by 1 400 places in addition to the planned expansion of 2 500. A further 4 600 places are to be created in 1983.

Subsidies are granted to private firms to help them create additional apprentice and trainee places. At the same time 5 000 additional apprentice and trainee places are to be set up during 1982 in the public sector. The aim is to extend the existing 'alternance training provision' widely enough to enable the normal system to offer all young people a training place.

## ■ Job promotion

A new 'Act on job creation' stipulates that every private and public employer who increases his workforce by taking on young people aged between 18 and 25 will receive a wages' subsidy amounting at present to DKR 80 000. This corresponds approximately to the average yearly wage of young people in their first jobs. This subsidy can be granted for up to three years.

The innovation in the 'Job Creation Act' and its main purpose is to place new projects in private firms. But the municipalities themselves may also set up their own 'production units' in fields such as transport, environment, energy conservation, recycling and many others. However, they must first obtain the approval of private industry so as to avoid any competition with private, rival products. Through this Act the Government hopes to save DKR 900 million and to create 15 000 jobs, approximately 50% in the private sector.

## ■ Guarantee of employment

The 'Act guaranteeing employment' which already came into force in 1979 has been modified to include the possibility of two-month training courses.

The Act stipulates that a nine-month employment contract in the private or public sector must be offered to all young people under 25 who have been jobless for at least 12 of the preceding 15 months. It also applies to those over 25, the only difference being they must have been unemployed for at least 21 of the preceding 25 months.

## ■ Funding of the guarantee to young people

The costs of the programme, after deduction of savings on unemployment benefit, are estimated at DKR 1.3 milliard for 1982 and DKR 1.8 milliard for 1983. In addition, the statutory contribution of municipalities to combat youth unemployment has been doubled: for larger municipalities a *per capita* increase from DKR 56 to DKR 112,

and for smaller municipalities a *per capita* increase from DKR 28 to DKR 56.

## ■ Combined training and production programmes

Besides the increase in normal training and employment provision, efforts are being made to develop new kinds of 'combined training and production programmes'. They aim to give young people a vocational qualification and to open up new employment opportunities.

The first programmes of this kind were set up in 1980. At the beginning of 1982 approximately 450 people were involved in 17 projects. Experience has shown that one to two projects can be implemented in each municipality, involving approximately 1 000 people. The vocational preparation offered to young people should be linked to a normal training place or permanent workplace. It usually lasts one year. The young people receive a training allowance which corresponds roughly to social security benefit.

Thus, combined training and production programmes help to support the career selection process and encourage young people to enter vocational training, continuing training or employment. Although vocational preparation does contain some elements of alternance training, it does not come up to the standard of vocational training leading to a formal qualification in the apprenticeship or basic vocational training system. Nor does it count as a credit towards these training forms.

This programme is directed mainly towards young people who, either because of personal difficulties or inadequate provision, have not obtained a training place or job in the normal training or employment system. This kind of vocational preparation seeks to improve their ability to compete in the normal system. There is a very high proportion of girls and handicapped young people in this programme.

## □ France

The 'Pacte National de l'Emploi' (National Employment Pact), which was set up in 1977 for the first time and implemented before 1979, offered special training, vocational preparation and employment programmes to young people under 25 and women who wished to return to work after rearing their children. In subsequent years, during the period covered by the report, it was partly supplemented and extended.

On the basis of past experience the Government of Giscard d'Estaing/Raymond Barre attempted to introduce a new programme of vocational training for young people whose education would not otherwise have included any form of vocational training. In June 1980 this was incorporated into an act on alternance training which sought to mould the above-mentioned programmes into a coherent concept of school and on-the-job training or practical experience. Parallel to this, the full-time vocational training school system of the Ministry of Education was to be extended.

However, the social and material status of young people in alternance training remained a controversial issue and the trade unions refused to support this project.

The new Government of Mitterand/Mauroy therefore felt compelled to take up anew the problem of the vocational and social integration of young people and alternance training. Their first step was to ask Professor Bertrand Schwartz\* to prepare a report in this field.

In the spring of 1982 this report led to new bills which propose that, at the beginning of the school year, those 16–18-year-olds, who have left school and found neither employment nor training places, are to benefit from 'vocational and social integration'. This is to take the form of alternance training, lasting up to two years and leading to a vocational qualification which is recognized on the labour market\*\*.

100 000 young people are to undergo this alternance training in the first year.

According to the general principles (cf. credit units) contained in a ministerial communication, these training systems are to draw heavily on the system of multidisciplinary credit units (*unités capitalisables*). The participants must be under 18. They are insured against illness and accidents and enjoy the status of 'vocational training trainees'. They are to receive a flat-rate allowance attractive enough to ensure regular attendance.

Firms and employers or professional associations have been invited to participate in

\* B. Schwartz: *The integration of young people in society and working life*, Report for the Prime Minister of France, Paris, September 1981, published in English by Cedefop, 1982.

\*\* See also Cedefop (ed.), *Vocational Training*, No 8/82, p. 21.

the implementation of alternance training. Framework agreements between the State and the branch associations are to provide detailed definitions of the modalities for placing young people in firms.

Training centres in either the public or the private sector are to organize training, find firms which are willing to participate, and define, in close collaboration with them, the objective and implementation of training programmes.

In order to encourage young people to seek information and guidance on the opportunities for vocational training and employment, the efforts of the various responsible institutions are to be integrated and decentralized. In all towns with more than 10 000 inhabitants commissions are to be set up which will bring together all potential sponsors and interested groups in order to determine the number of young people concerned and to offer them corresponding training and employment provision. These commissions are to set up a career guidance committee which will be financed from public funds.

Whereas this programme comes mainly under the aegis of the Ministry of Vocational Training, the 'young volunteers' programme is to be implemented by the Ministry for Youth, Sport and Leisure. It is aimed at some 10 000 young people aged between 18 and 26 and seeks to promote their social and vocational integration. Courses are to last between six months and one year. Here, too, participants will enjoy the status of 'vocational training trainees'. However, the activities must not compete with labour market job openings.

Moreover, for this age group measures launched in previous years under the 'Pacte National de l'Emploi' (National Employment Pact) and 'Plan Avenir Jeunes' (programme for the future of young people) are for the most part to be continued. They are, however, to be modified as follows:

- reorientation towards vocational qualification, and
- improved vocational integration particularly in the case of employment or trainee contracts.

Public funds, provided for all these programmes, are to be used mainly for personnel and operational costs whereas material needs are to be met by making optimum use of existing resources.

## □ The United Kingdom

In the past three years great efforts were made to establish programmes for the age group 16–19 by the Department of Employment and its Manpower Services Commission on the one hand, and the Department of Education and Science and its local authorities on the other. Sometimes these efforts were inconsistent and competed with each other. In the last two years, however, the UK authorities launched new programmes in order to establish a comprehensive system of vocational preparation and training for early school-leavers who otherwise would not get any access to training.

### ■ *Concentration of previous measures in a common programme*

Following long discussions between relevant organizations and responsible bodies, the British Government published a White Paper entitled 'A new training initiative: A programme for action'. It bears the signatures of the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Employment.\*

The paper contains three objectives for the near future which aim to mould the many measures and programmes to combat youth unemployment and to promote the vocational preparation and training of young people and adults into a common concept. These objectives are:

- to develop skill training including apprenticeship in such a way as to enable young people entering at different ages and with different educational attainments to acquire agreed standards of skill appropriate to the jobs available and to provide them with a basis for progress through further learning;
- to move towards a position where all young people under the age of 18 have the opportunity either of continuing in full-time education or entering a period of planned work experience combined with work-related training and education;
- to open widespread opportunities for adults, whether employed or returning to work, to acquire, increase or update their skills and knowledge during the course of their working lives.

The ten-point action programme, to which the Government has committed itself, contains, in addition to the general statements, five points for specific immediate measures:

\* Government White Paper 'A new training initiative: A programme for action', London, December 1981.

■ a UKL 1 000 million a year youth training scheme to begin in September 1983 which will guarantee a full year's foundation training for all those leaving school at the minimum age without jobs (the UK school-leaving age is 16);

■ more incentives to employers to provide better training for young workers;

■ an 'Open Tech' programme, developing and deploying conventional and distance learning resources, to make technical training more accessible;

■ a target date, 1985, for the abolition of age entry restrictions to apprenticeship and for recognized standards to replace time-serving for qualification in all the main craft, technician, and professional skills;

■ a small fund, UKL 16 million, to finance interesting local or sectorial training developments over the next two years.

### ■ *Apprenticeship modernization*

Apprenticeship modernization is, of course, at the heart of any overall strategy for training reform, and has often been seen in the past as an intractable problem of industrial power relationships, of conflicting vested interests, and of deep-rooted emotional attitudes. But, in fact, a good deal of the impetus for modernization in recent years has come from the union side, and considerable progress has been made towards the adoption of objective standards by, for instance, the development of modular training in the engineering industry under the leadership of training institutions in which the unions participate very actively. The setting of 1985 as the target date for the end of age entry restrictions and of time serving is the result of a consensus recommendation from the Manpower Services Commission.

The number of training places for apprentices fell at the end of the seventies from over 100 000 to 90 000. In 1982 a further drop is feared because of the recession.

### ■ *Unified Vocational Preparation (UVP) organized by the Department of Education and Science*

A pilot project, which has been steadily extended since 1976, offers young workers vocational preparation coupled with work experience. It is aimed in particular at young people with no vocational qualifications. The maximum length of courses is six months. During this period young people are released one day a week for continuing training purposes. In 1980/81 approximately 6 000 young people were covered by this



programme which imparted basic knowledge and skills related to their occupation. Financial incentives encourage the firms involved to release young people. In 1981 the project became an integral part of the Government youth education and training programme. What still seems to be undecided is whether the latter programme will only cover jobless young people or all young people during the transition from compulsory schooling to working life.

## ■ Youth Training Programme (YTS)

Two thirds of the UKL 1 500 million that the government is proposing to spend through the Manpower Services Commission by 1984/85 is accounted for by the youth training scheme it announces.

Based on the high quality one year traineeships already being developed this year for a minority of the 500 000 plus 16 to 18-year-olds entering the MSC's existing youth opportunities programme, the new scheme will replace YOP\* in September 1983. For those who have had no experience of work it will offer a training programme of up to a year with the following elements:

■ induction and assessment, possibly including some job sampling;

■ basic skills, including literacy and numeracy where they are lacking, the use of tools and machinery, some office operations, and communication skills;

■ occupationally relevant education and training, with the opportunity for personal development and the practice of basic skills in working contexts. Work experience will be integrated with a minimum of three months of further education or off-the-job training, which may be in the form of day or block guidance and counselling throughout the programme with continuous assessment and recording of progress in a form which will be recognizable both to the trainee and to potential employers.

Unlike the youth opportunities scheme, which was conceived primarily as a means of providing a short spell of work experience or work preparation and has only recently sought to upgrade its provision, the new scheme, says the Government, is essentially a training programme.

This is why, it explains, the level of allowance paid to the trainees will be consider-

ably lower than that for participants in the existing YOP. 'As trainees, it seems right that they should receive allowances that reflect their learning role. That is how they will make their contribution to the cost of a foundation training which improves their prospects of employment.'

The funds provided under the youth training programme should, in the long term, help:

■ to introduce a basic vocational training year for all young people during the transition from school to work which could possibly count towards apprenticeship courses, and

■ to update and expand apprenticeship/alternance training systems.

The Government's White Paper 'A new training initiative: A programme for action' made the Manpower Services Commission responsible for the management of vocational training programmes for young people in the 16-19 age group who are no longer in fulltime education.

A high level working group, including representatives from both sides of industry and education, was set up to report on the possibilities of this wider and more general scheme of foundation training for all minimum age school-leavers whether employed or unemployed and including first year apprentices. The working group produced its report in April 1982 and its recommendations have been accepted by the Government. The working group's main recommendations on the content of the new scheme and the assessment of the trainees are set out in the following paragraphs.

Training opportunities should be designed to last a year although there would be no requirement that trainees should remain in the schemes for a full year: for example, shorter stays would be appropriate for those with some experience of work on leaving school. Conversely it would be wrong to rule out a longer stay for some with special needs such as disabled young people. More generally, opportunities would build on trainees' existing experience and attainments and provide a foundation both for work and for further training as appropriate.

To qualify under the scheme any programme of training should satisfy criteria to be established by the MSC. From the outset these criteria should require any training under the scheme to provide an integrated programme of training, work experience and relevant education. In particular,

opportunities should provide for the trainee to:

- a) be properly inducted into the programme and each element of it and assess his or her attained skills, attainments and needs;
- b) receive a minimum of three months off-the-job training and/or relevant further education within a programme lasting a year;
- c) acquire defined core skills (e.g. practical competence in the use of tools and machinery and in some basic office operations);
- d) learn about and have direct experience of the world of work (e.g. working to deadlines, sharing responsibilities with adults, health and safety at work, role of trade unions, work in and for the community, etc.);
- e) receive an introductory programme of training and skills related to a broad group or family of related occupations;
- f) increase his or her effectiveness in defined 'process' skills (e.g. planning or diagnostic skills);
- g) develop personal and life skills;
- h) receive advice and support throughout the programme under guidance and counselling arrangements agreed with sponsors;
- i) be able, at completion of the programme, to transfer his or her acquired skills, knowledge and experience to other employment contexts, including further skills training or education.

It is intended that each young person on the scheme should secure a record of achievement which will be recognized by employers and others and act as a foundation for progression to work, continued training or relevant further education. To facilitate this and the achievement of other objectives, standards must be established and model schemes promulgated.

From September 1983 all minimum age school-leavers (16 years) will be guaranteed a place on YTS although, because of the large numbers involved, it may not be possible for all young people to join immediately on leaving school. It is likely that the initial participants in YTS will be mainly the young unemployed; the young employed currently eligible for UVP schemes and the first year apprentices, being absorbed progressively later (though up to 100 000 in these categories should be covered in 1983/84).

\* YOP: Youth opportunities programme, developed under the auspices of the Manpower Services Commission from 1977 onwards.

# Europe

Much work has yet to be done to persuade employers to accept the validity of this more broadly based approach to training.

It is intended that, by 1985, the YTS will supply vocational training for all minimum age school-leavers. The scheme will, therefore, absorb all the young people who are in the present target group for YOP and UVP. The concept of occupational training families will be introduced into the scheme to ensure coherence for the young people who take part in it.

## ■ *A new full-time vocational preparation year*

A growing number of young people are continuing their full-time education beyond the minimum school leaving age. The education service, therefore, has an obligation to ensure that the courses in schools and colleges of further education are as well matched as possible to the abilities and aspirations of all these young people. In the Government's view present provision falls some way short of that which is required to meet the needs of a substantial and important group of young people of widely varying ability but usually with modest examination achievements at 16+ who have set their sights on employment rather than higher education but have not yet formed a clear idea of the kind of job they might tackle successfully, or are not yet ready to embark on a specific course of vocational education and training.

The Government has, therefore, decided to establish a new national qualification in England and Wales to meet the needs of this group of young people in the 16-19 age group. The courses leading to this 17+ qualification will form a counterpart, in the field of full-time education, to the Youth Training Scheme and will be run in both schools and colleges. The courses should offer a pre-vocational year of a broad programme of general education with emphasis on its various types of employment; should develop personal attributes such as self-motivation, adaptability, self-reliance, a sense of responsibility and an ability to work constructively with others; should help each student to discover the sort of job the young person might expect to tackle with success. Some 60 percent of the course would be common to all students. This would include written and spoken English, mathematics, aspects of science and technology and their application in the modern world; and studies designed to give a broad understanding of citizenship and its

responsibilities; the way the country earns its living and the nature of its institutions. 40 percent of the course would consist of individual options of a general, commercial or technical bent. Careers education and guidance should be provided throughout the course and students informed about opportunities in further education.

The course will be prevocational in intent with a strong bias towards a practical component which could well, however, be not work placement but simulated work experience. It is intended that the nationally recognized qualifications, of a standard sufficient to carry weight with employers, will lead either directly to a job or to a specific vocational course. It is the intention that, for full time students, the 17+ will subsume existing provision in this field including some BEC and TEC\* courses. The Government expects some 80 000 young people to take up places on courses leading to the 17+ qualification.

## □ **The Netherlands**

### ■ *Apprentice training*

In the Netherlands, as in the United Kingdom, the number of newly concluded training contracts has fallen sharply, from 40 000 in 1979/80 to 27 000 in 1980/81. The Government hopes to increase this figure by at least 10 000 in 1983 by offering wage subsidies, under certain conditions, to enterprises. The success of this programme is, however, by no means certain particularly as a similar programme, introduced in 1976, was unable to curb the drop in training places provoked by the worsening economic crisis and the disinclination of enterprises to invest in general vocational training.

The new programme, effective as of 1 July 1982, should also help to improve the organization of apprentice training by setting up branch-specific funds. In this way the Government is seeking to encourage industry to bear some of the costs of vocational training within the framework of self administration. It is assumed that the enterprises would show more interest in increasing their own training efforts in order to draw the most benefit from their contributions. This new programme grants all firms who have joined such funds HFL 4 000 annually (approximately 40 percent of the minimum annual wage) for each newly concluded training contract. Firms,

\* BEC - Business Education Council  
TEC - Technician Education Council

who do not join such funds, receive only HFL 2 000 for each newly concluded training contract.

## ■ *Short, intermediate vocational training (kort middelbaar beroepsonderwijs KMB)*

This new training provision, under development in the Netherlands since 1979, is open to all young people, in particular to the jobless in this category. There are no specific school entry requirements.

The more systematic training side is organized in vocational and technical schools, with in addition periods of practical training in firms. The teaching staff and pupils are responsible for finding such training places in firms. This is a new form of alternance training which is supervised by the schools. It constitutes an attempt to cater for the differing learning needs of pupils and, at the same time, to impart social and professional skills. The main emphasis is on the vocational training of young girls in new fields of activity. A credit unit or modular system is being developed to enable the acquisition of recognized vocational qualifications. KMB is still in the experimental stage and final evaluations cannot therefore be made. The sponsors of this programme do, however, assume that it will in the medium term prove to be a viable alternative to the traditional apprenticeship system. Experience to date gives ground for optimism despite the fact that the number of training places offered is still limited.

## □ **Italy**

Attempts were made to implement the Legislative Act 285 on measures to combat youth unemployment, which was enacted in 1977, but they did not lead to the expected results. During the three-year period it covered, it was by way of job creation and training programmes to create approximately 40 000 new jobs.

Of the 864 000 young people who applied, only approximately 60 000 had obtained a job through this initiative by the end of 1979. The 12-month training-work contracts, provided for by the Act, played a minor role - only roughly 8 000 such training-work contracts had been concluded by the end of 1979.

Since 1980 Italy has had no national programme to combat youth unemployment. Because the regions have enjoyed extensive

autonomy in vocational training matters since 1975, new programmes have been developed at this level. In particular, new forms of alternance training, some with EC support, are being developed in several regions. However, the number of trainees they cater for is still limited. However, the number is expected to rise particularly as the quality of traditional apprenticeships leaves much to be desired. These new forms of alternance training last at least two years and are supervised and implemented by State vocational training centres. In the case of trainees undergoing practical on-the-job training, special agreements are drawn up between training centres and local firms. It is still too early for a final evaluation of these new training forms as the regions are experimenting with very different concepts.

## □ Luxembourg

In Luxembourg, as in the Federal Republic of Germany, the main form of apprentice training combines in-school and on-the-job training and work. The amount of in-school instruction differs according to the economic sector:

in the craft sector and retail trade  
8–40 hours

in the industrial-trade sector  
16–40 hours

in the business/administrative sector  
two years' full-time schooling, plus one year's professional experience

in the hotel and catering sector  
three periods of block instruction in each training year.

Special vocational orientation and integration programmes exist for jobless school-leavers and young people. These may consist either entirely or partly of periods of practical on-the-job training.

The Act of May 1979 on vocational training and technical secondary education must be regarded as an important step towards improved coordination of in-school and on-the-job training and work. Some pre-conditions for this have been met. However, it has still not been applied in important areas, e.g. in the recognition and equivalence of final certificates of different training channels and the regulation of access to further education and training centres.

## □ Greece

Even though Greece was not a member of the European Community at the time of the initiative on alternance training, the bodies responsible for vocational training still showed great interest in this concept. In particular, the Greek employment authority (OAED), which has been promoting such training forms for quite a while, seems to be interested in real cooperation in this area.

At OAED training centres, apprentices from firms with which it has concluded contracts, undergo three hours theoretical and practical training daily. In addition to this, they spend seven hours a day in the firm. The training lasts three years and leads to a recognized OAED qualification. However, due to the heavy time schedule, 30 percent of the apprentices do not sit the final examination.

Since 1981 the Ministry of Cultural Affairs has been carrying out a pilot project, with EC support, in Volos on the east coast. This project concerns a group of young people who undergo training articulated between the car industry and a vocational school over a period of three years. Three days per week are spent in the firm and two in the school. Other, similar projects are under preparation.

## □ Ireland

In recent years there has been a considerable increase in apprentice training programmes and vocational and technical schools in Ireland. Approximately six percent of a given age group undergo recognized apprentice training. Roughly three percent of a given age group can be found in unregistered apprentice training programmes.

The national training authorities are responsible for organizing and implementing recognized apprentice training programmes. The time schedule of such programmes is more or less equally divided between the school and the firm.

In addition to apprentice training, a whole series of *ad hoc* integration measures has been developed or extended. Around 16 percent of one age group attend vocational preparation courses or courses in office practice. However, these courses last less than one year. Work experience programmes (on-the-job practical training) cater for about 16 percent of one age group. These programmes run for six months.

In the Republic of Ireland a youth employment authority was set up in 1981 to take over the coordination and implementation of a large number of the programmes mentioned last.

Coordination is constantly found to be lacking between apprentice training and full-time vocational training. To date, efforts to establish articulation between the technical schools, responsible to the Ministry of Education, and apprentice training programmes or firms seem to have been unsuccessful despite the many demands for just such a system.

## □ Belgium

In Belgium apprentice training concentrates mainly on the craft sector and the retail trade, the so-called small and medium enterprises and independent firms. It is only aimed at a small group of young people who are likely to set up their own businesses or take over those of their instructors. Therefore, it has not as yet been extended to take in target groups other than the self-employed.

Despite the wish from many sides to offer improved and extended forms of alternance training, the emphasis to date has been on increasing vocational training provision in schools.

Recently, the employment authority introduced initiatives to encourage firms to provide basic and continuing training for young people. Within the framework of government measures to combat youth unemployment, large companies in particular should increase their present staffing levels by three percent. Any training demands this creates are to be met by the companies themselves, with the employment authority providing conceptual and material assistance.

The (re)discovery of the value of on-the-job training has emphasized the need to bring the school and firm, training centre and workplace closer together. Apart from the courses within the firm, which run parallel to the above-mentioned programmes and are supported by the employment authority, the trend toward alternance training has not developed to the fullest extent. However, new legislative initiatives are envisaged which aim in particular to improve alternance training provision for 16 to 18-year-olds.

# Europe

## Attempt to assess the development of alternance training in the individual Member States and in the European Community as a whole

### Positive trend

As confirmed by the Member State reports, important steps have been taken and positive developments are expected in the near future.

Alternance training seems to be:

- developing steadily into a recognized form of initial vocational training of young people which leads both to continuing training and employment;

- contributing towards the goal of 'training for all' which seeks to prevent young people, who have not benefited from adequate vocational preparation or training, from entering the labour market;

- easing considerably the transition from school to work both for young people and the firms which take them on.

Thus, the extension and improvement of alternance supports the readiness of all those concerned to:

- offer all young people aged between 16 and 18 training which is suited to their needs and linked to employment opportunities but also to offer older young people aged between 19 and 25 increased access to vocational training leading to a formal qualification which is in line with their professional experience;

- modernize the apprenticeship system, the qualitative and quantitative importance of which had been on the decline, and broaden its basis to ensure a more even balance between in-school and on-the-job learning and working activities;

- relate initial training more to the need for and availability of continuing education and training. The alternance training strategy involves apprenticeship modernization and incorporation of vocational preparation and integration measures into regular training provision. This provision should combine working experience and training and lead to vocational qualifications which are recognized on the labour market.

Such a strategy is closely linked to:

- training efforts to improve initial or basic training during compulsory education and during the transition from school to working life by improving young people's

vocational preparation e.g. by introducing visits to firms and work experience\*;

- the statement of intent of the Heads of State and Governments on 29 and 30 March 1982, promising all young people aged between 16 and 18 a job or training place (social or youth guarantee).

### A number of unsettled issues

Despite the fact that most Member States clearly recognize the importance of alternance training, the demands and statements of intent, voiced on many occasions, have still to be fully honoured. This will require joint efforts by all those concerned at all levels.

- There is still no provision for many of the young people who make up the target groups mentioned in the Council Resolution of December 1979 (see p. 3).

- Many forms of alternance training are still second class. They are aimed only at disadvantaged young people and tend more to stigmatize rather than to integrate these fringe groups, something which could be achieved by exposing them to the positive influence of normal training provision.

- Many forms of alternance training are merely a front for employment with no training of a reasonable standard. They prepare young people for the least stable sectors of the labour market where they will always be threatened by unemployment.

- Many forms of alternance training, including apprenticeships in some countries or situations, are still not incorporated into an extensive (vocational) training concept which would allow trainees to go on to continuing training and/or return to the formal education system.

- They are still overly slanted towards the short-term needs of some firms or economic branches and are not capable of providing young people and industry with qualifications which will be of value in the long term.

### Need to improve the basic conditions

These difficulties may only be overcome if:

- the basis of legal and collective agreements concerning the rights and duties of

\* Cf. The programme, drawn up by the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council, for improving the transition of young people from school to work in 1976, and the following programme of 1982.

young people, firms and training institutions is widened and improved in those countries, which have not as yet done so;

- this (a) leads in particular to a clarification of the financial burden and its distribution among the various sponsors, the public institutions and firms, and the private and public sectors;

- a clearer picture is produced of foreseeable trends or demographic growth, economic and social development and the development of labour markets based on analyses of occupational distribution. The goal must be to mount an extensive offensive in the field of qualifications in order to meet the coming economic and socio-structural changes in the individual Member States and in the European Community as a whole.

Only once the conditions mentioned under (a), (b) and (c) have been improved or established, will it be possible to integrate firms, represented by their employers and workers, more fully into the programme; this is a very important prerequisite to the success of alternance training.

Only then will it be possible to support an active employment policy through investment and efforts in vocational and continuing training in the form of alternance.

If, however, the above-mentioned conditions are not met, this could – in the long term – lead to alternance training remaining a second-class form of training which treats the symptoms but neglects the cause of the illness.

## Technical and scientific support from Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin, supported the implementation of the resolution in the Member States in many different ways, for example by:

- publishing a special edition of 'Vocational Training' (No 4/1980) on alternance training;

- organizing a conference in June 1980 (cf. Cedefop conference report on 'Youth unemployment and alternance training');

- preparing a 'guide for practitioners' of alternance training which was published in September 1982.

In addition, the Centre initiated studies on the possible extension of the alternance training concept to continuing training for

older workers. The first results are expected in 1983.

Finally, the studies of the Centre on the 'Planning of vocational preparation projects for unemployed young people' and on the 'Social and material status of young people during the transition' also dealt with alternance training, even if this was not the sole preoccupation.

## Summary and conclusions

In order to respond to the original objectives of the resolution and in connection with the project to offer all young people aged between 16 and 18 a qualifying training (cf. Communication of the Commission to the Council on Vocational Training in the 80s), great efforts must still be made by both the EC and the Member States.

### Study of the modes of financing and costs of developing alternance training

The importance of this subject has led to efforts to conduct a comparative study in Member States on the costs and financing of initial vocational training provision for young people upon completion of compulsory education. An analysis of present financing modes and the distribution of costs among various bodies is to serve as the

basis for suggestions of ways of reaching this objective. A plan for such a study is available. Its application to this target group and this objective can probably begin in 1983.

### Training of trainers in alternance training

Preliminary work by Cedefop should lead to special recommendations which will either be incorporated into the above-mentioned principles or possibly stand in their own right. This depends on the results of current studies.

### Alternance training for older young people and workers

Cedefop has begun preliminary work in this field, particularly with regard to:

- educational leave and possibilities for its extension;
- preventive action to combat unemployment through continuing education and training;
- innovations in continuing education and training at EC Member State levels; and
- the link between vocational training and job creation programmes or new forms of employment (cooperatives, alternative small and medium enterprises, self-help projects, etc.).

These current Cedefop studies may help to implement the main programmes which are

mentioned in the European Commission's communication on vocational training in the 1980s.

Three years have passed since the Council's resolution of December 1979. Many efforts have been made to implement it but this is too short a period to allow final evaluations to be made. Therefore, this report should be regarded more as an interim report than a final one.

Furthermore, since 1979 alternance training has emerged as only one possible form of vocational preparation, training and integration. In view of the shortcomings of vocational training which follows compulsory education, other forms and methods of training also have a right to exist and, in some cases, to undertake independent duties. Nothing would be more detrimental to alternance training than to turn it into a dogma and to seek to base every form of education and training on articulation between in-school and on-the-job training and work. At the latest during periods of worsening unemployment, alternance training has proved to be an independent form of basic and continuing training which is worthy of promotion and recognition.

All the same, a higher level of qualification among workers does not create new jobs; other policies must be pursued parallel to (vocational) training policies, if the right to work is to be guaranteed.



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## Abbreviations:

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DE = German  
EN = English  
FR = French  
GR = Greek  
IT = Italian  
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