

Training & Employment

A FRENCH NEWSLETTER FROM CEREQ AND ITS ASSOCIATED CENTRES

COMPARISONS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS: RESULTS OF THE INTEQUAL PROJECT

The Leonardo programme defines a certain number of priorities for the comparison of vocational education and training programmes in the different European countries. Given the variety of social contexts involved, and particularly the place of vocational training, what can such a comparison offer? Céreq's participation in the Intequal project (Acquisition of Integrated Qualifications for Professional Work and Study) provides the basis for an answer to this question.

The INTEQUAL project

Through the Leonardo programme, Céreq participated in the project known as Intequal: "The acquisition of integrated qualifications for professional work and study: An assessment of innovative approaches in seven European countries". The proposed objectives of this project were summarised by its organisers as follows:

"A basic issue in EU countries is how to increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training and to place it on equal footing with general education. One approach initiated in a number of countries is to offer 'double' or 'integrated' qualifications which open up alternative paths into professional work and advanced studies. The proposed project will be designed so as to provide descriptive and analytical knowledge for understanding both the differences and the common features of integrated qualifications, background knowledge on the trend towards integrating general and vocational education, and action-oriented knowledge fostering the exchange of experience with these schemes.

"Three major areas of investigation were envisaged:

- the functioning of integrated qualifications in the context of the educational system and the social and economic framework of the countries in question;

- the educational issues implied in the schemes of integrated qualification, particularly in relation to the learning process, the validation of competences and individual guidance;
- the transfer of qualitative innovation achieved in these schemes into mainstream vocational education and across national systems via pilot projects under LEONARDO."¹

The project thus intended to compare relatively recent transformations in vocational training in the different countries. These changes took different forms depending on the systems in the countries involved, which, for the purposes of the project, were divided into three categories:

1. Schemes related to integrated systems of general and vocational qualification, which fall under overall legislation on education:

- The new vocational programmes at upper secondary level in Sweden and Norway, which lead to a basic vocational qualification and a general entitlement for access to higher education;

1. "Der Erwerb integrierter Qualifikationen für Beruf und Studium - eine Untersuchung innovativer Ansätze in sieben europäischen Ländern" (proposal submitted to the European Commission). Berlin: Wissenschaftsforum Bildung und Gesellschaft e. V (WIFO), August 1995, p. 8.

CENTRE D'ÉTUDES ET DE RECHERCHES SUR LES QUALIFICATIONS

- The professional baccalauréat in France, which provides alternative paths into employment and advanced studies.

2. Schemes operating within a more diversified system of courses and institutions under the authority of various educational and professional bodies:

- The modular courses leading to the General National Vocational Qualification at advanced level in England;
- The diploma for long MBO courses in the Netherlands, which qualifies for professional work as well as higher vocational education (HBO) in the same field.

3. Schemes based on the dual system of vocational education and qualifying for the vocational stream of higher education:

- Pilot projects in Germany (Bavaria/Brandenburg) offering a complete vocational training programme for skilled workers and the entrance qualification for advanced technical colleges (Fachhochschule);
- Part-time vocational courses for skilled workers at the private technical academies (Fachakademien) in Austria, which lead to an advanced technical qualification also entitling studies in a related field.

Theoretical issues

From the outset, the different partners were well aware, albeit in general terms, of the differences in their respective situations: the German dual system is a watertight training stream nearly exclusively aimed at preparing for a professional activity, while the French vocational baccalauréat is explicitly based on the principle of the dual orientation, which is concretised by the existence of cross-overs between the different training streams.

Under these circumstances, comprehension is a necessary prerequisite to comparison, as is clear from two basic conclusions of studies carried out in the field of international comparisons:

- Each comparative analysis must begin by questioning the principles of comparability it is invoking;
- Every vocational training system is part of a societal whole, and as a result, "country differences concerning wages, operations, diploma structure or labour-management strategy . . . reveal interdependencies proper to each society and emerge as central to the definition of these societies and the forms of economic and social regulation characterising them".² This situation precludes reasoning in terms of functional equivalence and defining one most efficient system which would be applicable in any country context. We can thus avoid brute forms of comparison like those that imposed their consequences on the French educational system in the mid 1980s, with the successive goals of bringing 80 percent of an age

group to the baccalauréat level on the Japanese model and then doubling the number of apprentices on the (West) German model.

On the other hand, we may still question the possibility and usefulness of comparing systems that seem incomparable because of their particular social context. On this issue, an initial response was proposed in the wake of the studies by Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre already cited: the comprehensive detour imposed by the analysis of a foreign system has an explanatory power that enriches the questions raised about the national system as well as the analytical grids applied to it. As examples of this heuristic enrichment, we may cite the research conducted by Campinos-Dubernet and Grando or, more recently, Verdier and Möbus.³ The fact still remains, however, that in this kind of analysis the country specificities remain insurmountable, and it is difficult to imagine how the systems of the different countries might be brought together. On this point, Freyssinet and Lefresne take a more nuanced position, according to which, "national specificities, which are the product of a historical dynamic, have a high level of inertia but do not lead to determinism."⁴ According to this hypothesis, the analysis of innovations may bring out dynamics and convergences that would be hidden by a comparison based on structural features culturally rooted in the training systems.

An approach through innovation

The Leonardo programme falls within this second approach:

- It recognises the existence of a societal dimension and specifies that, in order to develop a high-quality vocational training system, one must first understand how the existing system fits into its wider cultural and socio-economic context and the manner in which it forms one of the many interconnected and interdependent factors dealing with competitiveness and employment."⁵
- It encourages the analysis of the questions faced by these different systems and provide a medium for their transformations, which suggests that such questions may provide the opportunity for similar or shared experiments allowing historical specificities to be at least partially surmounted.

The Intequal project, which is part of this Leonardo programme, recognises a societal effect and the possibility of convergences, or even solutions that are to some degree transferable on the basis of innovations introduced in order to encourage the dual orientation of the diplomas. These two dimensions of analysis provided a framework for developing the assessment of the resulting comparative analyses.

2. M. Maurice, F. Sellier and J-J. Silvestre, *Politique d'éducation et organisation industrielle en France et en Allemagne*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1982.

3. M. Campinos-Dubernet and J. M. Grando, "Formation professionnelle ouvrière : trois modèles européens," *Formation Emploi* no. 22 (1988); M. Möbus and E. Verdier, 'La construction des diplômes professionnels en Allemagne et en France', *Céreq Bref* no. 130 (April 1997).

4. J. Freyssinet and F. Lefresne, *Seminar on the international comparison of youth transition schemes* (unpublished document). Paris, 1993.

5. "Leonardo da Vinci Promoters' Guide 1995". European Commission, General Direction XXII, Education, Training, Youth.

Confirmation of the "societal effect"

Situating the dual-orientation training models within their respective national systems brought out a variety of positions with regard to the following criteria:

- size of the scheme
- place within upper secondary education
- balance of the dual orientation
- level of vocational training
- access to higher education
- target groups
- organisation of learning
- support agencies
- stage of implementation

The following table illustrates this diversity.⁶

Characteristics of the schemes

Criterion	Distinction	Scheme						
		A	E	F	G	NL	N	S
Dimension	Educ. sector							
	Indiv. course							
	Indiv. project							
Orientation	Employment							
	Highereduc.							
Level of training	Initial							
	Further							
Target group	Young unqualif.							
	Young qualified							
	Adult qualified							
Access to higher educ.	Techn. course							
	Acad. course							
Organisation of learning	Full-time							
	Dual							
	Part-time							
Supporting agency	Government							
	Industry							
Implementation stage	Initial							
	Established							

- = valid / equally valid (within a scheme)
- = more valid (within a scheme)
- = less valid (within a scheme)
- = not valid

- A = Austria: WIFI Academies
- E = England: GNVQ: advanced level
- F = France: vocational baccalauréat (Bac pro)
- G = Germany: pilot projects within the dual system of voc. educ.
- NL = The Netherlands: MBO: long courses
- N = Norway: vocational streams within upper secondary education
- S = Sweden: vocational programmes within upper secondary education

6. From the book published on Intequal's outcomes: A. Brown and S. Manning (ed.), "Qualifications for employment and higher education - A collaborative investigation across Europe", Tampere University, 1998.

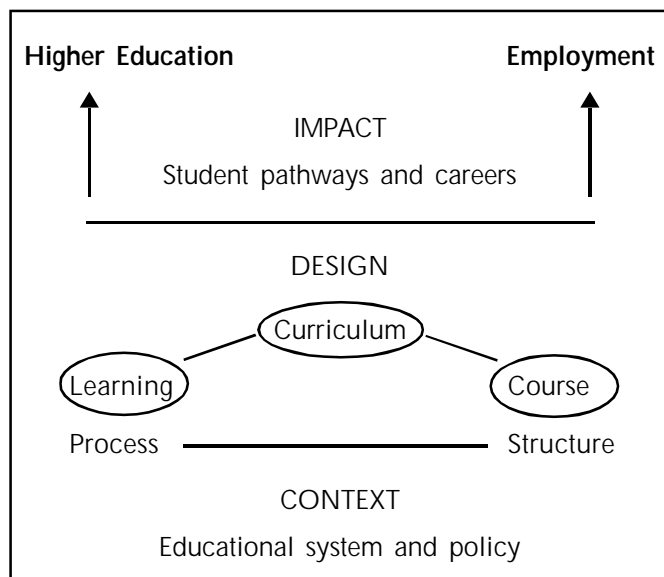
In spite of the supposedly federating nature of the theme, the country specificities are evident and leave their mark on innovations: these appear to be marginalised in relation to the rigorous framework of the German dual system, integrated into the logic of the streams and cross-overs of the French, English or Dutch systems and included in a general revision of upper secondary education in Norway or Sweden. This first analysis confirms the power of history and the impossibility of constructing a topology, even within apparently close models. Each country is a particular case, and any attempt to generalise seems risky: "In no way can one deduce a ranking of schemes".⁷ The mutual learning generated by European co-operations must be sought elsewhere.

Transferable solutions or common questions?

Given these preliminary observations, the prospect of transferrable solutions adopted from one country to another has no sense. Does this mean that the mutual learning of this comparative exercise amounts to recognition that comparison is impossible? Undoubtedly, if the objective is an identical transfer of solutions from one country to the other. But at the same time, three forms of mutual enrichment are worth singling out:

- A possibility of modelling that allows the points of maximum innovation and the relations between them to be situated (see schema below). This schema offers the particular advantage of seeking links between the context, the conception and the objectives of the training system, but also the autonomy that characterises each of these aspects. Thus, countries that differ sharply in the relationship between innovation and the dual orientation--the desire to monitor the continuation of studies amongst vocational baccalauréat holders in France, to develop those with the GNVQ in the United Kingdom, to maintain a certain separation of streams in the Netherlands--have the same questions about the link to be redefined between vocational and general training. Beyond the country specificities previously cited, the question of integrating general and vocational education runs throughout all these systems and gives rise to proposals for key qualifications, core skills and cross-linked competences which must be carefully studied in terms of both their differences and their similarities.

7. Sabine Manning (ed.), "Qualifications with a dual orientation towards employment and higher education. A comparative investigation of selected issues in seven European countries. Intequal Report II". Berlin: WIFO, 1997.



Conclusion: Symbolic violence, heuristic approach, appropriation by the actors?

It is clear that the assessment of the Inequal project gives the impression of an effort to be continued rather than satisfaction over work that has been completed. For the time being, questions of methods relating to the principles and forms of comparisons between country training systems are as important or more so relative to the observations that may be made about the "attractiveness of vocational education", the "inequality with general education" or the "parity of esteem" evoked in the objectives of the Leonardo programme. This might be perceived as a result of a willfully provocative statement of these objectives, intended to stimulate creativity, or as symbolic violence aimed at imposing a common European culture. In fact, only the way in which the overall evaluation of the Leonardo programme will be conducted will allow this question to be answered. In any case, the undeniable contribution of this programme is twofold:

- The identification of questions that are fairly common amongst the members of the group. To cite one example, the fact that the Norwegian system went from 13 to 210 specialities in 3 years is worth studying more closely in relation to the French approach of seeking the broadest possible core curricula.

- The taking into account of the phase of application where the innovation takes place: "The lessons themselves are fairly different in character. While some of them may reflect an achievement (e.g., score subjects in Swedish programmes), others may be an attempt at solving a problem (e.g., synoptic assessment in GNVQ); or while some are long-established features (e.g. the dual orientation of MBO courses), others are still innovative (e.g., the expansion and renovation of apprenticeships in Norway)".⁸ These differing time frames certainly offer a significant lead for a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying innovations. At the same time, they raise the question of making innovation a subject of research, the meaning of which cannot be adequately apprehended on a spontaneous basis.

- It allows training systems to be envisaged in their dynamic dimension, which earlier comparative studies tended to underestimate in their concern for defining structural features. This confirms the existence of a societal effect, which brings out the need to create a comprehensive approach to the different systems. For the moment, such an approach is limited to a small number of people. Is it possible to envision a Community approach to appropriation by the country actors?

- It brings out common questions amongst different countries whose inclusion within Community problematics, as defined in the framework of the Leonardo programme, is a result if not of outright manipulation then at least of considerable bending of the texts. Can we hope that future programmes will allow us to start out from preoccupations shared on the grass-roots level?

Jean-Louis Kirsch (Céreq)

Sabine Manning (WIFO, Berlin) - Project coordinator

8. See note 6.

briefing

▼ Updates

Towards a Common Platform for the Observation of School-to-Work Transition in Europe

Can existing European surveys be used to analyse the school-to-work transition? This is the question that Céreq set out to answer at the request of the General Directorate "Education, Training and Youth" division of the Commission of the European Communities. The sources explored come from the annual Labour-Force Survey (LFS) carried out by each of the member countries since 1994 and the European Community Household Sample (ECHS) initiated in 1993.

Céreq attempted to define the nature of the individual data useful for carrying out such statistical analyses in order to reply to the following questions: how should the training received be described? Which descriptors of the situations encountered on the labour market should be favoured? How should a category corresponding to individuals in the process of labour-market entry be established?

Céreq is suggesting modifications of the LFS and ECHS in order to improve the treatment of the question of labour-market entry and in particular to allow the creation of a "beginners" category. Some of these suggestions have already been implemented, such as the introduction of more details on initial training, on the year the highest-level diploma was received and on wages. In the long run, this evaluation should result in the creation of a questionnaire focussing on relations between initial training and labour-market entry, which would complement the Labour Force Survey.

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Annick Kieffer (LASMAS), tel. (33 1) 40 25 10 03

"Policies on Low-Wage Employment and Social Exclusion in Europe"

Third conference of the LoWER (European Low-Wage Employment Research) Network

19-21 November 1998

Groningen, Netherlands

The focus of this conference is the European debate on (un)employment policies. The main topics include:

- Policy measures directed at low-wage employment
- Shifts in employer demand away from unskilled workers
- Secondary effects of product demand on low-wage employment
- Low-wage employment as a labour-market segment
- Consequences of low pay on poverty and social exclusion

This list is not exhaustive. International comparisons amongst European countries and between Europe and the United States are welcome.

Information: <http://www.eco.rug.nl/lower>

Abstracts (2-3 pages) should be submitted no later than 15 June 1998.

By e-mail (inside the message): LoWER@eco.rug.nl

On paper: Wierner Salverda, Faculty of Economics, University of Groningen, PO Box 800, 9700 AV Groningen, The Netherlands.

Fax: (31 50) 363 3720.

Korean Researchers Visit Céreq

Two representatives of the Korean Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET) visited Céreq headquarters in Marseille last March. The purpose of their stay was to discuss the French certification system and improve their knowledge of training programmes for engineers. This initial contact with Céreq should give rise to other exchanges; the Korean authorities are hoping to make KRIVET a Céreq on the Korean scale. KRIVET was founded in September 1997 at the instigation of the Korean Ministries of Education and Labour. It functions as a governmental institution responsible for guiding and reinforcing vocational education and training policies. Its objective is twofold: providing every individual with life-long access to training and increasing the country's competitiveness.

Contact: Annie Bouder (Céreq), tel. (33 4) 91 13 28 28.

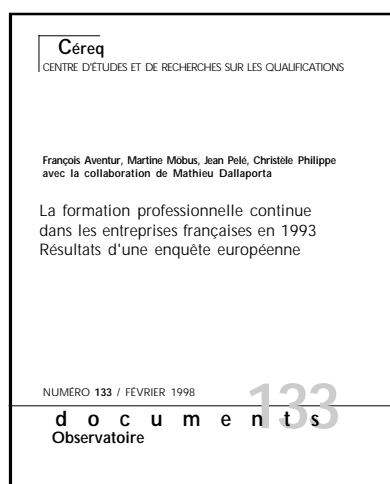
Céreq on the Web

Céreq's Web site allows you to remain informed about the centre's activities and publications. The articles from Training and Employment and the Bref are available on-line along with the tables of contents for the quarterly journal Formation Emploi and abstracts of the articles appearing in it.

The Documentation section provides access to the centre's different bibliographic data bases. In addition to all of Céreq's studies, this collection includes numerous publications on the training-employment relationship that have been acquired by the Centre since 1988. Searches can also be expanded to regional and international libraries and documentation centres.

<http://www.cereq.fr>

▼ New Publications



La formation professionnelle continue dans les entreprises françaises en 1993. Résultats d'une enquête européenne

[Continuing Vocational Training in French Companies in 1993. Results of a European Survey.]

✍ François Aventur, Martine Möbus, Jean Pelé and Christèle Philippe, with the collaboration of Mathieu Dallaporta

This document presents the French results from the first European continuing vocational training survey (CVTS). The survey was conducted as part of the FORCE programme for the development of continuing vocational training within the European Community. Its interest lies in the fact that it questions the concepts and classification common to the twelve member countries where the survey was carried out. The French part of the survey was conducted by Céreq, in conjunction with the National Statistics Institute (INSEE) and the Department of Action, Research and Statistics (DARES) of the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity. This document, which begins with a brief comparative analysis based on the information disseminated by EUROSTAT, provides an original contribution to the statistics resulting from the use of employers' tax statements on continuing vocational training. (See Elyes Bentabet and Christian Zygmunt, La formation professionnelle continue financée par les entreprises. Exploitation des déclarations fiscales des employeurs no. 24.83. Année 1995. Céreq Document no. 130, September 1997.) It includes previously unpublished information on the management of competences and continuing vocational training in the companies. Beyond the data relative to training courses, it also deals with other training situations, notably on the job.

Document no. 133, Observatoire series. Céreq, February 1998. 106 pp. 100 F (plus postage)
e-mail orders: antonucci@cereq.fr

Céreq Brefs Published in 1998

- "La formation professionnelle des jeunes en Angleterre. Les enseignements d'une gestion par incitations marchandes". [Vocational Training of Young People in England. The Lessons of Management by Market Incentives.] Maiten Bel, Annie Boudier, and Morgane Le Doaré. June 1998.
- "Les certificats de qualification professionnelle. Une certification à l'image de la diversité des branches professionnelles". [Vocational Qualification Certificates. A Certification Reflecting the Diversity of the Economics Branches.] Anne-Marie Charraud, Elsa Personnaz and Patrick Veneau. May 1998.
- "Des professionnels du sport, de la culture et de l'animation à l'école. Une place qui reste à construire". [Sports, Culture and Activities Professionals in the School. A Space that Remains to be Created.] Jean-Paul Cadet and Jean-Christophe Pétrone. April 1998.
- "Les normes d'assurance qualité ISO 9000. Prescription accrue ou opération de dévoilement des savoirs de l'entreprise ?" [The ISO 9000 Quality Insurance Norms. Greater Restriction or an Operation for Revealing Company Knowledge?] Myriam Campinos-Dubernet and Christian Marquette. March 1998.
- "Apprentissage. De nouveaux parcours de formation". [Apprenticeship. New Training Paths.] Yvonne Pérot and Georgie Simon-Zarca. February 1998.
- "Activité économique, emploi et formation continue dans l'industrie : impact d'une récession". [Economic Activity, Employment and Continuing Training in Industry: The Impact of a Recession.] Elyes Bentabet and Christian Zygmunt. January 1998.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EUROPE

During the 1980s, the Commission of the European Community initiated a whole series of programmes and activities in the field of vocational education and training. The best known of these programmes had a given focus, such as, for example, PETRA (initial training), FORCE (continuing training), COMETT (university-business co-operation) or EUROTECNET (promotion of skills related to technological innovation).

The compartmentalisation of the vocational training field brought about by the co-existence of these various programmes--each of which obeyed its own rules--reflected the absence of an overall conception of what a European intervention in vocational training might be. This is hardly surprising, because a real European authority in the area of training only exists since the Maastricht Treaty. Article 127 of the treaty lays the groundwork for such an authority in areas that reinforce and complement national policies on the issue, with an aim of mutual learning and the possibility of gradual convergence.

These developments led to the creation of three major support tools for education and vocational training: the programmes known as Socrates (education), Leonardo da Vinci (vocational training) and Youth for Europe (youth mobility). Without really being the instruments of a "policy" in the true sense of the term, these three programmes seek to encourage co-operation amongst the different actors in education and training while orientating their actions and analyses around priority issues.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme, which funded the Intequal project discussed elsewhere in this issue, sets out nineteen objectives divided into three categories:

- those which contribute to the effectiveness and quality of vocational training;
- those which are aimed more directly at content or methods;
- those which address specific publics.

Notwithstanding the somewhat "poetic" listing of its various objectives, the programme foresees their realisation through three kinds of interventions: pilot projects (with the functional goal of creating products), placement and exchange activities (which displace individuals undergoing training) and research (including the exchange of comparable data). The Intequal project falls within this last category.

Established for a period of five years, the Leonardo programme will come to an end in December 1999, and the decision on what is to follow is expected in mid 1999. While certain evaluations have already been initiated, at least in individual countries, its exploitation at the European level, as well as the impact that this will have on a possible revision of the programme's objectives and modes of operation do not yet seem to have been defined.

Annie Bouder

▼ Formation Emploi

Recent articles in Céreq's quarterly journal, no. 61 and 62

Call for Papers

«Work Activities and the Dynamics of Competence»

A special issue of Formation Emploi edited by Renan Samurçay, Serge Volkoff and Alain Savoyant.

The notion of competence, which is both polysemic and polyvalent, serves to designate very different realities depending upon the approaches (sociological, economic, psychological, etc.) and the fields of application (human resources management, training, et al). It refers not to the properties of an entity but rather to the relations that this entity maintains with others. In fact, it may be discussed in relation to qualification, training, performance, job access, work organisation, production and so forth.

The papers for this special issue should contribute to analysing the dynamic of competences in work. The aim is twofold: (1) acquainting researchers and practitioners who deal with competences at more «macro» levels with the concepts, tools and results coming out of more «micro» approaches, and (2) attempting to create bridges between these two levels of analysis, which sometimes seem too distant from one other, when in fact they elucidate different aspects of the same problem.

The following questions will be addressed: What are the competences that are really invoked by individuals or work groups in real work situations? How are these competences apprehended? How are they really recognised and evaluated? How and under what conditions are they developed by the work activity and in training? What links do they maintain with work experience? What changes do they undergo with aging and technological and organisational changes? How do they adapt themselves to confront these various changes?

Publication is scheduled for June 1999. Proposals for articles should be submitted to Formation Emploi at Céreq no later than 10 September 1998. Tel. (33 4) 91 13 28 95 - e-mail: fournier@cereq.fr

Formation Emploi no. 61 January-March 1998

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«L'emploi dans le commerce de détail japonais. Une comparaison avec la France».

[Employment in Japanese Retail Trade. A Comparison with France]

✍ Jean Gadrey, Florence Jany-Catrice, Thierry Ribault

«L'emploi juste-à-temps dans la distribution au Japon. Le cas des convenience stores».

[Just-in-time: Flexible Employment strategies in Japanese Retail Sales. The Case of Convenience Stores]

✍ Thierry Ribault

«Apprentissage: Le phoenix renaît-il des cendres ? La formation professionnelle en Grande-Bretagne.

[Apprenticeship: Is the Phoenix Rising from Its Ashes? Vocational Training in the United Kingdom]

✍ David Marsden

«L'insertion professionnelle des jeunes. Quelques réflexions théoriques».

[The School-to-Work Transition. A Few Theoretical Observations]

✍ Jean Vincens

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✍ Olivier Liaroutzos

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✍ Elisabeth Dugué

«Contribution à la modélisation de l'insertion professionnelle».

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✍ Gabriel Tahar

Special Section: Exclusion and Training

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✍ Introduction by Pierre Roche, articles by Jean-Claude Roumestan, Marie-Claude Zolesi, Annyk Toulotte and Françoise Lima

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✍ Joachim Casal, Maribel Garcia and Jordi Planas

«De l'intégration à la précarité : le "grand intégrateur" en péril ? Un entretien avec Robert Castel»

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✍ Christine Fournier