

Training & Employment

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM CEREQ AND ITS ASSOCIATED CENTRES

THE ACCREDITATION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN FRANCE What Role for Joint Inter-Occupational Supervision?

Is it possible to design a scheme for the accreditation of qualifications which, based on the recognition of the training dimension of work, would be jointly supervised by labour and management, open to all salaried employees and broadly recognised by the occupational branches? In the face of a labour market characterised by discontinuous work experiences and precarious employment conditions, such a mechanism would permit mobilities between activity sectors to be efficiently managed in a wider context than that of the certifications presently issued by the branches. What place could such a programme occupy within the French certification system?

Over the past decade, public authorities and the social partners have attempted various approaches to the accreditation of qualifications. The discussion underway within the French employers confederation (Mouvement des entreprises de France, MEDEF) on the feasibility of a joint inter-occupational scheme for the accreditation of qualifications marks a recent effort in this area (see Box page 2).

The recognition of the training dimension of work as a means of access to diplomas and certificates constitutes the main thrust of actions undertaken by public authorities. The 1992 law on the accreditation of work experience, mainly used to obtain diplomas issued by the national education system, and experiments with vocational competence certificates (*certificats de compétences professionnelles*, CCP) launched in 1997 by the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, thus opened another path for access to certification. Most recently, the 'accreditation of experience' (*validation des acquis*) section of the law on social modernisation of 17 January 2002 was aimed at giving new impetus to this approach.

In parallel, the social partners, aware of the stakes involved in the changing nature of qualifications, have entered the field of vocational training supply. A 1984 law thus gave the occupational branches' National Joint Committees on Employment (*commissions paritaires nationales de l'emploi*, CPNE) the possibility of accrediting qualifications

defined as having priority for the companies in the sector. The vocational qualification certificates (*certificats de qualification professionnelle*, CQP) which were set up in this context thus entail the elaboration of activity standards which, in general, reflect the desire to dissociate certification from training.

These different approaches have all, in some way, constituted collective responses to the shortcomings of job management practices and later, those of competence management, which were developed inside the companies in the 1980s. The tools elaborated in the context of forward-looking job and competence management (*gestion prévisionnelle des emplois et des compétences*, GPEC) were only implemented in the large concerns, mainly in industry. In 1998, the MEDEF, expressing the desire to generalise these practices to all companies, asserted the latter's responsibility for the evaluation of competences. However, the latest inter-occupational negotiations have demonstrated a reorientation of this position towards the need for collective supervision of evaluation and accreditation practices.

Post-Taylorist representations of work, reflected in the competence approaches but already present in GPEC, break with the rationale of individual job stations and thus with the logic—traditional in French companies—of career advancement by seniority. Such a change raises the

CENTRE D'ÉTUDES ET DE RECHERCHES SUR LES QUALIFICATIONS

question of the role of professional mobility in the definition of qualification when that mobility does not depend on promotion. In this context, the increasing involvement of the occupational branches in the area of accreditation of qualifications is helping to define new collective references for supervising professional mobility (taken as the whole of the transitions possible within one company, one sector or between sectors). At the same time, employees are provided with tools allowing them to manage their career paths in the face of transformations in the labour market.

THE ISSUES AT STAKE

The companies' present preoccupations in the area of mobility are multiple. Recruitment and development of workforce loyalty, career development or advancement and required conversion into other activity sectors are all forms of mobility which are only partly served by the tools the companies have set up, mainly for internal use. In the case of inter-sectoral mobility in particular, they have few points of reference for the labour market, since existing certifications rarely specify the abilities needed to go from one sector to another.

A joint inter-occupational scheme for the accreditation of qualifications could permit the validity of the certifications issued to be extended beyond the boundaries of each of the sectors, thus making it possible to organise crossovers between occupations in different sectors. At the same time, by giving branch players a methodological strategy, it could encourage the spread of the CQPs and thus make them more visible on the labour market. One essential question remains, however: the choice of methods for defining both the standards and means of accreditation. Indeed, if such a scheme is to work, this choice of methods must be respected by all the branch players involved in its implementation.

The proliferation of standards—for 'occupations', 'jobs', 'competences' and so on—reflects the need, shared by the world of business and training alike, to revise the representations of work in order to adapt to what is

perceived as a constantly changing reality. But this proliferation also reflects existing divisions over the interpretation of social changes or methodological choices. One of the stumbling blocks stems from the fact that the tools elaborated to accredit past experience sometimes unwittingly give an abstract vision of the human intervention, fragmented into units of measurement—competences—which can be isolated from each other. No attempt at creating procedures to encourage the spread of the accreditation of experience is shielded from this reification of work. Reinforcing the role of labour and management in the accreditation of qualifications requires overcoming this risk and choosing principles which can be adopted by participants with a variety of interests.

COMMON STANDARDS FOR MULTIPLE EVALUATIONS

The homogenisation of the 'occupations' standards which are supposed to provide tools for the scheme could constitute a first step in this necessary harmonisation. Such standards would be elaborated according to common rules, regardless of activity sectors and qualification levels, so as to allow a comparison of occupations. The rules would be based on an interpretative grid aimed less at bringing out what individuals do and know than understanding how they function, in other words, how they react to different situations confronting them. The 'occupations' standards would thus attest to the mastery of activities but also to the individual's ability to transpose the resources used for these activities to new situations. It is important that this guideline reflect the trade-offs made by the individual in face of the different constraints proper to the larger context, such as productivity, teamwork, organisation or security. The standard would thus permit a typology of work situations allowing the identification of similarities between activities or occupations.

The pertinence of the accreditation scheme also depends on its ability to take into account the difficulties individuals may encounter at the time of the evaluation in function of

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF AN ACCREDITATION SCHEME

The Céreq study on which this article is based was undertaken following a request from the MEDEF on the feasibility of a scheme for the accreditation of occupational qualifications which would be directed by the social partners and which would be accessible to all salaried employee regardless of the way their qualifications have been acquired. On the basis of this request, Céreq formulated a two-part interrogation: How to formalise competences which might be subject to recognition? How to accredit these competences?

In order to respond to these questions, a study was initiated in 2002 in six occupational branches—insurance, textiles, temporary work, retail food distribution, chemicals and personal services—which have very different practices in the area of accreditation of qualifications. The objective of this study is to seek common denominators within these practices in terms of standards on the one hand and accreditation on the other.

• *Standards*: on the basis of a cumulative comparative analysis of existing standards, this line of investigation permitted the elaboration of seven "occupation" standards. These describe very different

occupations—from industry and services, supervisory and operating staff—according to a single grid structured by fields of activity and types of situations. This analysis permits a uniform reading of work activities and an assessment of the possibilities of establishing connections between occupations in different activity sectors.

• *Accreditation*: this research analyses branch practices concerning the recognition of qualifications on the basis of surveys carried out among branch players, company management (directors, human resources supervisors, training officers) and branch training bodies. It shows the great diversity of evaluation and certification practices, which reflects, among others, a very disparate interest in inter-sectoral mobility. Furthermore, innovative accreditation schemes instituted by certain branches, such as textiles or retail food distribution, demonstrate a concern for not placing the individuals involved in an exam-like situation and for diversifying the forms of evaluation (interview, test, simulation, on-the-job observation) in order to grasp the reality of the work as clearly as possible. ■

their profile and the content of their activities. To this end, it could be based on a 'multi-form evaluation' allowing adjustments between the standard intended to reflect the essence of an occupation and the concrete situations arising in the work context. In order to avoid any spectre of the examination, the procedure would involve combining the two or three forms of evaluation deemed most appropriate—interview, test, observation, simulation, written application—in function of the public, but also the objectives of the accreditation, which may be aimed at in-company, intra- or inter-sectoral mobility. This principle, which has already been tested in the textile branch with 'Modular Qualifying Paths' (*Parcours modulaires qualifiants*), would seem to lend itself to other activity sectors as well. Left to the appreciation of labour and management, the choice of the different forms of evaluation would then open a wide range of possibilities for the evaluation of professional knowledge between the two poles of description and demonstration.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR STRUCTURING CAREER PATHS

Rather than presenting the occupation as a rigid framework with airtight boundaries, the structuring by activities and types of situations would permit the identification of possible career paths both inside and outside the given occupation. Indeed, an individual can, for a variety of reasons, wish to accredit his or her qualification without targeting a given occupation as is the case, for example, with beginners or those who work in a company encouraging versatility by making them intervene in a variety of occupational fields, or those seeking accreditation for bodies of knowledge which have no intrinsic link between them because they are used in both professional and private life. A joint inter-occupational scheme could thus respond to two kinds of needs:

- The accreditation of a qualification corresponding to the overall mastery of an occupation. This is the prevailing configuration in the attribution procedure for the CQP.

- The accreditation of elements of qualification corresponding to the mastery of fields of activity related to different occupations. In this second case, the accreditation would attest to the mastery of fields of activity linked to several occupations and would bring out the adaptability of an individual going from one register to another. In addition, accrediting this asset would compensate for the lack of visibility of qualifications associated with different occupations (see diagram below).

Thus, a large concern aware of the fact that it often seeks this kind of itinerary and seeking to provide its employees with qualifications highlighting their versatility could, through the intermediary of the branches concerned, opt for the joint scheme. Collective control would thus favour the structuring of career paths which do not fit into the present system of branch qualifications.

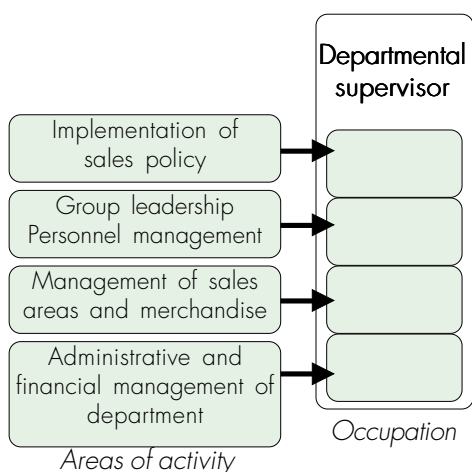
REVISING THE NOTION OF OCCUPATION

If a system of joint accreditation of qualifications provides an opportunity to develop a conception of the occupation which is more closely based on real work, it should be kept in mind that the occupation is not simply a professional point of reference but also an essential element of personal identity emerging from a social construction which, through collective recognition, gives it all its value. The accreditation of qualifications cannot be limited to the identification of productive capabilities; it must also attest to an individual's value in a context larger than that of the activity sector alone.

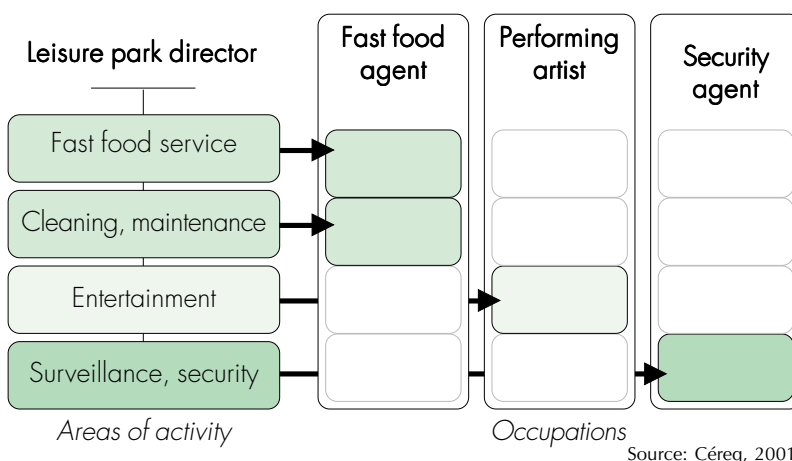
The occupation remains a powerful referent for the occupational branches, the companies and employees, as well as young people faced with the choice of their future programmes of study; it thus serves as a motivating factor and provides the main rallying point for labour and management to establish their dialogue in the CPNEs. A revised definition of occupation, referring to real work and conceived as an open, flexible space, could become the subject of a compromise among social partners set on

AN ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR TWO TYPES OF NEEDS

■ Accrediting a qualification corresponding to overall mastery of an occupation



■ Accrediting elements of qualification corresponding to the mastery of activities associated with several occupations



Source: Céreq, 2001.

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intervening more actively in qualification policies, within one branch or a group of branches.

Joint inter-occupational accreditation, as a complement to existing schemes, could contribute to two objectives:

- By proposing the accreditation not of certifications—tied to levels and specialisations—but of occupational qualifications—associated with occupations or work activities likely to be linked from one sector to another—it offers greater readability, and thus greater fluidity, to a labour market open to inter-sectoral mobility at all qualification levels.
- By attributing a function of social recognition of qualification to labour and management, in parallel to public programmes, it suggests that the labour market can be controlled 'on the spot' by the participants themselves, with qualifications which are at once occupational (thus specific) and national (thus general).

Insofar as they permit more fine-tuned adjustments of individual competences to company needs, the CQPs were initially conceived as tools complementing national certificates and diplomas. Functioning as a kind of enlargement of the CQP mechanism, the joint inter-occupational accreditation of qualifications could likewise take its place within France's certification system—on the condition that there is a continuity between joint accreditation and public certifications. This complementarity of the different accreditation mechanisms would provide a guarantee that career paths are 'insured' by qualifications set up within a framework larger than that of the branch alone.

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ACCREDITATION OF QUALIFICATIONS: VARIED BRANCH PRACTICES

Since 1984, and especially since an inter-occupational agreement of 1991, continuing training has become an important issue in collective bargaining at branch level. With the Vocational Qualification Certificates (CQP), which still represent only 1 percent of the total certifications granted each year, labour and management, operating within the context of the National Joint Committees on Employment (CPNE) now have the possibility of defining the content of priority training programmes for their sectors. While the CNPEs are quite active in certain branches, such as retail food distribution or chemicals, they are not overly solicited elsewhere. Furthermore, in emerging branches which are not yet well structured, such as personal services, the absence of a CNPE prevents any action in the area of accreditation of qualifications. And the participants in the CNPEs, who have until now been little involved in the definition of training content, often do not have sufficient expertise to develop qualification and accreditation standards.

The history of the relations of each occupational branch with the national education system, as well as with the National Association for Adult Vocational Training (Association Nationale pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes, AFPA), also shapes practices in the area of accreditation of qualifications, which are most often complementary to public certifications. Over the past decade, all the vocational

advisory committees (*commissions consultative professionnelles*, CPC) have undertaken measures of greater or lesser scope aimed at reviewing titles and diplomas in function of the changes in occupations themselves. Many branches, moreover, have tested public schemes for the accreditation of work experience. Within this framework, some of them, such as retail food distribution or chemicals, have chosen to develop branch certifications, while others, such as textiles or temporary work, have preferred the public certifications.

This spectrum of certification practices reflects the diversity of the issues involved in job mobility. In retail food distribution, but also in chemicals and insurance, branch certification is aimed at responding to the demands of intra-sectoral mobility and, depending on the case, permits the attraction of young people into the sector, the development of employee loyalty or career management. For the branches which have chosen to privilege public certifications, the objective is rather to encourage the inter-sectoral mobility of employees. Thus, in textiles, where the internationalisation of production has resulted in massive job cutbacks, the diploma is aimed at anticipating the conversion of employees to other industries. Similarly, in temporary work, measures undertaken to favour access to public certifications allow national recognition of competences acquired by temporary workers in the course of their different assignments. ■

FRENCH RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF OCCUPATIONS, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Céreq

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In Focus

Are the social partners in Central and Eastern Europe ready to follow the French example of developing a joint inter-sectoral mechanism for the accreditation of qualifications ?

The French employers federation (MEDEF) has taken the initiative to experiment with the development of a joint inter-sectoral mechanism for the accreditation of occupational competences. Accreditation refers to a process of assessing and recognising the competences that people have developed in different contexts.

Often, most of the knowledge and skills obtained through formal education becomes obsolete within a decade after graduation. People need to keep themselves up to date throughout their careers. Work not only offers particularly important learning opportunities but usually provides a better environment for developing competence, in the sense of the ability to apply one's knowledge, skills and personal qualities. However, since much of this learning is individual and spontaneous and does not belong to a clearly defined plan of learning, recognition becomes much more problematic. There is no control of the learning process as in the formal education system and only the results can be evaluated.

Throughout the world, employers have always recognised the importance of work experience and usually prefer experienced workers to newcomers. However, when a person has experience in a different type of job, or when he or she comes from a completely different sphere of work, it becomes more difficult to assess the value of the experience. With today's rapid economic and technological changes, the boundaries between different sectors have become more vague and subject to constant flux. Career paths are very different from those of a generation ago. Life-long jobs are disappearing and it has become more acceptable to change jobs, employers and sectors. This means that there is also a need among employers to know how to recognise individuals' abilities to perform a different kind of job, in other words, to recognise the relevant experience. It is important to look beyond the curriculum vitae and ascertain the abilities that have been developed.

It is therefore not strange that the development of an inter-sectoral accreditation system has been initiated by employers in order to facilitate the accreditation of competences within and between sectors. Trade unions also have an interest in being involved in such

developments, since they want to ensure that the principles will benefit individuals as well as enterprises.

The fact that this initiative has been taken up by the social partners, independent of the public sector and training providers, is extremely important. It shows that there is a need for a more work-based approach to qualifications. With the development of the knowledge economy, industrial relations are changing and becoming more focused on people and the workplace. Companies and social partners are developing a much stronger interest in human-resources development.

The success of the initiative will depend on the process of bringing together stakeholders from different sectors to agree upon common approaches. The mechanism that has been developed is not in itself the main achievement of the development of this joint inter-sectoral accreditation system. It is one of many existing methods for analysing occupations. The main purpose of the methodology is building confidence across the different sectors. It is important for occupational competences to be more clearly recognizable without being alienated from the core purpose of the occupation or sector involved. There is always the fear of 'atomisation'—the splitting up of occupations into bit-size pieces, with no logical links between them. In such a case, a compromise solution focuses on types of activity and work situations.

Like other methods for occupational analysis, this approach attempts to analyse occupations at a more abstract level than the tasks performed within a specific job. This facilitates the process of comparing different occupations from different sectors and allows the recognition of competences across sectors.

Relevance for transition countries

The need for mechanisms to facilitate greater workforce mobility is universal. The fact that the socio-economic players are the driving force behind such mechanisms will also become more common, as they are best placed to define their own needs.

Qualification systems in transition countries are changing gradually. They are still firmly rooted in the formal

education and training systems, but the transition from command to market economies has deeply affected these systems and has often widened the gap between the worlds of work and education. A qualification mechanism that is driven by the social partners and promotes trans-sectoral mobility would therefore be an important step forward in closing the gap.

To what extent is this important example transferable to the transition countries? In this short article it is not possible to give a comprehensive overview of the developments in each of the countries and I will therefore limit myself to the main principles of relevant support activities of the European Training Foundation in transition countries.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) started its activities in 1995 to assist the reform of the vocational education and training systems in transition. Currently the Foundation works with more than forty countries and territories in Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Western Balkans and the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union and Mongolia.

Since its inception, the European Training Foundation has been working on the issues of social partnership and qualification systems. The initial activities played an important role in bringing together stakeholders from different organisations in the partner countries, and facilitating the debate on qualifications. This process helped to develop a common understanding of what we mean by qualifications, competences and vocational education and training standards.

Qualifications are usually based on standards, which specify the competence obtained after a certain training programme or for a certain occupation. The ETF work on standards has helped to reach agreement on a number of key principles for the development of vocational education and training standards that are based on best practice in EU and transition countries.

A breakthrough in this work has been the linking of occupational and training standards. Modern vocational education and training standards cover employment requirements, learning requirements, and assessment requirements.

- The employment requirements define occupational competences.
- The learning requirements translate these competences into learning outcomes that can be used to develop training programmes or learning paths.
- The assessment requirements describe the evidence needed to assess the competence.

If standards are to be relevant to both education/training and work, they must be easily updateable and accessible to all users. The role of the social partners as representatives of the world of work in the standard-setting process is extremely important.

Although there have been many pilot projects to develop new standards, qualification systems are changing only gradually. In many countries, standards are still very bulky documents that are accessible only to those who develop them. Most transition countries have adapted what they had before. The role of the social partners in setting new qualifications is still rather weak and the process of reform is clearly government driven.

Some countries, such as Romania, Estonia and Slovenia, have made a great deal of progress in developing competence-based qualifications. In Romania, an attempt has been made to ensure that this process involves the social partners by setting up a standard development body as a tripartite institution. However, the development of new qualifications is a lengthy, costly process that the social partners are unable and unwilling to sustain by themselves, without strong government participation.

Many institutions have been established in the partner countries to represent labour and management. However, the degree of involvement of enterprises and individuals in these organisations is still quite weak in comparison to EU countries.

The accreditation process of occupational competence covers two main elements: the assessment of a person's competence and the recognition that a person has the competence. The definition of competence-based standards is a first step toward helping the countries to establish more competence-based training systems. The implementation of the standards has led to different approaches to assessment and learning. The European Training Foundation developed a pilot project on standard-based assessment of competence which was aimed at elaborating guidelines for partner countries for the development of (more) competence-based assessment systems.

This project has helped us to define a common concept of "assessment of competence", to identify the main principles and best practice in the EU and partner countries, and to develop a road map for the development of (more) competence-based assessment systems in specific partner countries. The outcomes of this first phase will be published soon in a concept paper on assessment of competence that is designed for experts in assessment in partner countries and a paper that puts forward the pros and cons of competence-based assessment systems for policy- and decision-makers.

The mechanism initiated by MEDEF can provide an important example of how such a competence-based system could work, but it is still remote from the realities of the transition countries.

Arjen Deij, ETF, 11 October 2002

This article reflects the collective efforts of the ETF Focus Group on Lifelong Learning.

The results of the ETF's research on competence, standards, qualifications, and social partnership are published on the ETF website (www.etf.eu.int).

Formation Emploi

Articles in Céreq's quarterly journal, no. 76, October-December 2001

A special 280-page issue marking Céreq's 30th anniversary with a wide range of articles on changing relations between work, employment and training over the past three decades.

La France a-t-elle changé de régime d'éducation et de formation ?

[Has France Changed Its Education and Training System ?]

◆ Eric Verdier

The 1985-1995 period undoubtedly constituted a major turning point for the French educational system, marked by a sharp increase in the number of *baccalauréat*-holders and higher-education graduates, and the creation of new vocational diplomas and training streams. But can we say that these developments mark a change in the system of training per se? The author examines the situation from several points of view: the democratisation of the education system, the valorisation of training, and notably vocational training, on the labour market, the way the competences of those trained are used in the companies.

La formation professionnelle initiale : les beaux jours de l'expertise...

[Initial Vocational Training: A Bright Future for Expert Advice]

◆ Benoît Bouyx

Initial vocational training is constantly called upon to evolve in order to keep up with changes in the world of work. If these changes were slow during the decades following World War II and the domination of the Taylorist model, they are accelerating today in an increasingly uncertain context. The future of work raises many questions, but there is a general lack of expert advice, which is more and more necessary for decision-makers. This situation explains the extent of the latter's expectations with regard to Céreq.

L'enseignement professionnel, figure imposée de l'exception française

[Vocational Education and Training, the Keystone of the French Exception]

◆ Muriel Penicaud

Beyond the profound transformations in our educational system over the past thirty years, what emerges above all is the persistence of a VET system whose principles, representations and modes of intervention relative to the labour market remain fundamentally unchanged. Such continuity and special features can only be understood with regard to the larger trends in French society, which are brought out by this article. The VET system may thus be seen as a 'keystone' of the French exception, with its rituals, codes and intangible schemas.

Insertion professionnelle : quels enseignements tirer des comparaisons internationales ?

[Labour-Market Entry: Lessons to Be Drawn from International Comparisons]

◆ David Raffe

Over the past thirty years, research and policy debates over labour-market entry have become ever more international. Nonetheless, the institutions and patterns of the transition process retain their national specificities. As a conceptual bridge between national specificity and world-wide policy issues, the concept of the transition mechanism permits countries to learn from each other in spite of their differences. For the author, significant aspects of this mechanism include the standardisation of programmes, evaluations and school-based certifications, the distinction between education and training systems, the linkages with the labour market and the occupational or internal nature of the labour markets themselves.

Trente ans de Céreq, des qualifications aux compétences : chronique d'un oubli accepté ?

[Céreq's Thirty Years, from Qualifications to Competences: Chronicle of Amnesia by Consent?]

◆ Alain d'Iribarne

In spite of the profound transformations which have occurred in economy and society, as well as in the social-science disciplines dealing with work, questions bearing on the new information and communications technologies and competence show more similarities than differences relative to those raised about automation and qualifications at the time of Céreq's founding. How then are we to explain the predominance of a vision of rupture rather than continuity in this area, combined with Céreq's withdrawal from a field of research where it was initially active and innovative?

L'analyse du travail et de son organisation

[Analysing Work and Its Organisation]

◆ Matéo Alaluf

Can the qualification of workers be deduced from the content of their work? Céreq's early studies postulated the determinism of techniques over the tasks to be carried out. The author of this article maintains on the contrary that qualification should be considered as a process of creating hierarchies based on social judgements. He thus stresses the contemporary relevance of debates on the new forms of work organisation which marked Céreq's beginnings.

Que s'est-il passé en trente ans? Le travail entre passé et avenir

[What Has Happened in Thirty Years? Work Between Past and Future]

◆ Anne-Marie Grozelier and Pierre Héritier

Notwithstanding the discourse on post-Taylorism, company management methods still do not give work the central role it merits. This article surveys the evolution of work over recent decades. Contrary to accepted rhetoric, work organisation is not always centred on a process of developing qualification. It is to be hoped that negotiators will come to grips with these issues—if the distance between the sites of negotiation and decision-making does not continue to widen.

Changements des organisations, des relations professionnelles et de la relation salariale

[Changes in organisation, labour relations and the wage nexus]

◆ Henri Rouilleault

Céreq, and Anact (National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions) were both created in the 1970s. Anact's mission is to understand work in order to transform it. After numerous changes within work organisation and the labour market, the early twenty-first century is facing the emergence, or re-emergence, of new issues: the quality of work and jobs in a context of reduced working hours, the demographic crisis provoked by the ageing of the labour force or collective bargaining for individual rights (e.g., the right to training or to progressive diminution of work activity during the five years before mandatory retirement).

Au-delà des marchés internes : quelles mobilités, quelles trajectoires ?

[Beyond Internal Markets: What Kinds of Mobilities and What Kinds of Itineraries?]

◆ Jean-François Germe

It is still common to characterise the specific nature of France's

labour market in terms of 'internal markets'. But this notion has probably lost its relevance given the rise in education levels, changes within the companies and the organisation of work, the declining role of seniority or internal mobilities in career advancement, the spread of precarious employment and so on. Thus, new mobility patterns would seem to be emerging. These would no longer depend on the employees' attachment to the company but rather, on reversible, short-term strategies. New frames of reference on the internal and external markets would seem to be replacing the categories previously set up to identify mobilities. But the findings of these initial observations still remain tentative.

Italie : les règles changent, les parcours professionnels beaucoup moins

[Italy: When Rules Change More Easily than Career Paths]

◆ Marinella Giovine

In Italy, a 1997 survey of inter-generational mobility brought out the sharp rigidity of career paths, with mobility limited to neighbouring categories on the job ladder. This situation is generally explained in terms of fairly restrictive labour regulations and the recognition of the 'legal value' of diplomas. In recent years, however, less stringent regulations, the spread of 'atypical' work and the growth of employment still do not seem to have helped the labour market become more fluid. But things may well change in coming years. And this prospect raises doubts about the low level of both supply and demand with regard to continuing training, the inability of the present social security system to accommodate discontinuous career paths, and the retrenchment of employment services within local labour markets.

Pour une sécurité sociale professionnelle

[For a Work Security Programme]

◆ Jean-Christophe Le Duigou

Beyond the question of employee mobility, there is a need to define a new status for work and employment. It is not sufficient to "protect career paths". The guarantees associated with mobility should reflect greater social responsibility relative to workforce management. This is why the CGT labour federation is calling for the creation of a genuine "work security" which, on the model of social security for healthcare, would create the conditions for universal access to employment, training and qualification.

Formation et éducation tout au long de la vie

1971-2001 : Deux réformes, un même défi

[Life-Long Training and Education. 1971-2001: Two Reforms, A Single Challenge]

◆ Vincent Merle and Yves Lichtenberger

Through the process of reforming vocational training undertaken at the end of the 1990s, the participants attempted to adapt the institutional framework of continuing training to the transformations of employment and work but they also sought to respond to questions left unanswered by the 1971 law. The negotiations begun in December 2000 allowed labour and management to lay the foundations of a system aimed at developing training programmes at the joint initiative of employee and employer, the definition of career paths and the accreditation of past experience. The suspension of these negotiations in October 2001 will require social partners and public authorities to renew their dialogue in order to establish the different aspects of an individual right to training.

Formation professionnelle : Pourquoi ? Pour qui ?

[Vocational Training, for What Reasons and for Whom?]

◆ Jean-Marc Devaud

Vocational training has been an important element of the social dialogue for thirty years. Unfortunately, by imposing an obligation of due care rather than one of objective results, the law of 1971 overly focused this dialogue on funding and procedures. Vocational training has thus departed from its initial twofold objective—furthering employees' professional development and company competitiveness. In the face of present changes, effective training requires co-operation among all the players and their willingness to meet the needs of the individual and the company alike.

Production et transmission des savoirs : Repères prospectifs

[Production and Transmission of Knowledge: Guidelines for the Future]

◆ Paul Santelmann

The concept of life-long training gives rise to different interpretations of the process it is supposed to reflect. Are we dealing with an extension of the field of intervention of the permanent VET systems or a process of appropriation of the training function by the companies? The increase of knowledge produced within the workplace has reduced the predominance of the permanent structures for the transmission of knowledge. The viability of autonomous training systems lies in the invariability of the knowledge to be transmitted and the difficulties encountered by civil society in ensuring that transmission. As these two parameters assume less importance, "smart" companies and training bodies will have to redefine their ties beyond the traditional customer-provider relationship.

Certifications et formation tout au long de la vie : deux approches contradictoires

[Certifications and Life-Long Learning: Two Contrasting Approaches]

◆ Michael Young

In the context of the recent interest raised by the reform of certifications in a number of countries, this article begins by making a distinction between the intrinsic and institutional logics of any educational policy in order to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each. In face of continuously changing training needs, the article pleads for the lasting advantages of traditional institutional models and signals the dangers of overestimating the possible role of a reform of certifications in the achievement of education and training objectives.

Gouverner les systèmes de formation professionnelle : planification, marché, coordination ?

[Governing Vocational Education and Training Systems: Planning, Market, Co-ordination?]

◆ Philippe Méhaut

Conceptions of relations between work, employment and training have profoundly evolved over the past few decades. The "great expectations" of the 1970s with regard to centralised planning did not hold up in face of scientific and technical criticisms and the rise of unemployment. Today, new tools rely on more decentralised co-ordination among players, on the utilisation of various incentives accompanying the project and the contract. The mastery of detailed information becomes an issue in these processes. The ways vocational training systems are governed thus become full-fledged components of relations between training and employment and should be integrated into the analytical models used in this field.



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