From Formal to Non–Formal

From Formal to Non–Formal:
Education, Learning and Knowledge

Edited by

Igor Ž. Žagar and Polona Kelava

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

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INTRODUCTION

IGOR Ž. ŽAGAR AND POLONA KELAVA

Non–formal learning? Non–formal education? Non–formal (non–formally acquired) knowledge? The authors of the monograph *From Formal to Non–Formal: Education, Learning and Knowledge* are anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, political scientists, education scientists and historians of education, and therefore the subject covered is a broad one whose contents reach into fields that at first glance appear to be very distant from each other. It is precisely this diversity of approaches that offers the best promise of new findings regarding non–formal learning, education and knowledge and that represents a fruitful basis for further reflection on these topics.

Generally speaking, we define learning as

"a process by which an individual assimilates information, ideas and values and thus acquires knowledge, know–how, skills and/or competences. Learning occurs through personal reflection, reconstruction and social interaction. Learning may take place in formal, non–formal or informal settings." (Terminology… 2008, 111; source: Cedefop, 2004; European Commission, 2006a).

Knowledge, as one of the results of learning, may be defined in the most general terms as:

"The outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of study or work." (Terminology… 2008, 105; source: Cedefop 2004; European Commission 2006a).

But is knowledge really simple to define? (cf. Sosa 1970) How are the principles and theories of knowledge and about knowledge developed? Is it possible that formal education is sufficient to construct something as complex as knowledge? If it is true that learning may be divided into formal, non–formal and informal learning depending on the circumstances in which it takes place, this cannot be said of knowledge.

Knowledge cannot be divided and it is difficult or impossible to break it down in terms of its origin. To a certain extent we can define the context in which knowledge is produced, which may be formal, non–formal or informal,[1] but knowledge as a product of a combination of all types and circumstances of learning cannot be artificially divided, since it is stored in the individual as an indivisible whole, which, though it may consist of several components, nevertheless remains indivisible. Non–formal learning – the principal subject of this monograph – is just one of the processes that produce knowledge (if it is even possible to isolate it). We recognise non–formal learning in a wide variety of forms, formats and contexts, and it takes different appearances; this is also the subject of the present monograph, in which the following question is asked: are the outcomes of non–formal learning equivalent to, subordinate to or perhaps even superior to the outcomes of formal learning?

Thinking about knowledge and learning, and in particular about non–formal learning, raises many questions and prompts us to re–examine these concepts. Is knowledge always an advantage? What is the value of knowledge? Can knowledge also represent an obstacle to the individual? Can one have too much knowledge? Knowledge acquired by non–formal routes can be unsuitable in terms of content and may even hinder the individual on the path to desired (employment–related) positions and (social) status. Can knowledge that is acquired non–formally be a disadvantage for the individual? Knowledge does not always fit into the framework of the present time and does not always coincide with direct or broader circumstances. Can there be a moment in which we possess certain knowledge but society is not ready for it? History tells us of many (too many?) such moments. The present monograph will show that such unexpected, sometimes surprising and unpleasant situations and destinies are not only the domain of the past.

Knowledge acquired by a non–formal route can become the motive power of personal and personality development, and it can become a driving force in the development of society. "Non–formal" knowledge can be the basis for "formal" knowledge. Or vice versa. Non–formal knowledge can be a trigger of development. The non–formal learning of *some* (nursery school teachers, school teachers, university professors, researchers) can lay the foundations for the formal education of *others*. Research, curiosity and the connection and integration of knowledge lead to new knowledge. Is this the consequence of formal or non–formal

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[1] The difference between these terms or concepts and how we can define and substantiate them is discussed in the present monograph.

education and learning? Can we really draw a boundary between them? Formal knowledge and formal education would be different from how they are if non–formal elements had not been integrated in them (over the course of history). Can non–formal knowledge actually exist at all without a basis in formal knowledge? And what is the difference between knowledge and knowing? (cf. Hetherington 2012)

The validation of knowledge acquired non–formally can be conditioned by cultural, social, historical and political conditions. Is knowledge therefore something objective or is it subjectivised? (cf. Autor 2013, 31) Can we connect the knowledge acquired by someone who learns with the circumstances in which it is formed, and if so how? Is knowledge "merely" part of competences (alongside skills and practices)?

It is commonly said that learning produces knowledge. Now, however, we invert the question. Can knowledge also "produce" learning? Can more knowledge lead to more learning? What kind of learning is selected in this case by the learner?

Over the course of history, and even today, formal education has been more easily accessible to the wealthier classes and/or the children of the better educated (cf. Eurostat 2013). Is non–formal (adult) education therefore the type of education that is more accessible to individuals with a lower level of educational attainment? Statistics show that individuals with higher levels of educational attainment more frequently appear among participants of non–formal education (ibid.). Do learners then actually choose what, where and in what way they are going to learn?

Does knowledge have its own limitations? All phenomena have their limits. Does knowledge have them too?

The question that has been asked by many people in past decades – and is being asked with greater insistence in the age of global neoliberal governance – is as follows: can we assign a value to knowledge? Can we evaluate it, describe it or define it with sufficient accuracy? (cf. Billet 2001; Colley, Hodkinson, Malcolm 2002) Individuals learn non–formally in a wide variety of contexts: public, private, professional, amateur, etc. Does knowledge only have value for the individual, only for society, or (necessarily) for both? A very general answer to this question could perhaps be: knowledge is a value and has its own changeable (social) value.

But, can non–formal knowledge (also) be an obstacle for society? Can a situation occur in which we possess certain non–formal knowledge, in which individuals help to create it and transmit it to society, but society is not ready for it? Can non–formal learning and education therefore represent competition for formal education? Can they hinder it, or perhaps

substitute it or even prevail over it? Non–formal learning draws on broader resources than formal education, including its surroundings. Is this an advantage of non–formal learning, or is it perhaps a disadvantage?

The authors of this monograph have set out their views on these topics and the questions raised from three different perspectives: 1) non–formal knowledge and learning in academic contexts, 2) non–formal knowledge and learning in connection with entry to and mobility within the labour market, and 3) non–formal knowledge and learning in the family environment.

The authors have undertaken a review of selected aspects of non–formal education and learning. In the introductory chapter Tadej Vidmar illustrates selected aspects of non–formal education in Ancient Greece, the Middle Ages and the period of the Reformation. Drago B. Rotar writes about the informal acquisition of knowledge in various circumstances and contexts, including socialisation, assimilation, enculturation (the social process of the formation of individuals), and acculturation (cultural adaptation). Tihomir Žiljak discusses professional accountability and personal responsibility in the context of non–formal adult education and policies relating to this. Taja Kramberger highlights the importance of non–formal and informal methods of acquiring knowledge in the case of resistance to anti–intellectualism, and analyses anti–intellectualism itself. Nives Ličen considers learning in family transitions (with the birth of children and when children leave home) via the theories of biographical learning and transitional learning. António Fragoso uses participatory research to look at non–formal and informal learning in a community in southern Portugal. Petra Javrh illustrates the importance of teachers' professional excellence, something that is very important in non–formal education too. Later on, the authors address a group of topics relating to recognition of the outcomes of non–formally and informally acquired knowledge, from three different perspectives; Marko Radovan offers an international comparison of the recognition of non–formally and informally acquired knowledge and underlines the importance of suitably developed procedures and instruments for the recognition of such knowledge; Klara Skubic Ermenc considers whether national qualifications frameworks can and should support the evaluation of the results of non–formal and informal learning; and Polona Kelava proposes a view of the recognition of non–formally and informally acquired knowledge as something which can (also) lead to an alternative arrangement of society from that which is consolidated by formal education. In the concluding article Sabina Ž. Žnidaršič shows how acquiring, developing and maintaining employability most frequently derives from non–formal and

informal forms of learning, and considers the role played in this process by university careers centres.

The monograph thus offers (possible) answers to some of the questions listed above, as well as starting points for reflection on the (increasingly) varied dimensions and possibilities of formal, non–formal and informal knowledge and learning.

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CHAPTER ONE

SELECTED ASPECTS OF NON–FORMAL EDUCATION IN ANCIENT GREECE, MIDDLE AGES AND THE REFORMATION

TADEJ VIDMAR

Abstract

Different methods of non–formal education which go beyond traditional approaches and classifications are becoming increasingly popular; new trends are taking shape, particularly in the field of adult education, and understanding of the importance of lifelong learning is growing. Alongside non–formal learning, emphasis is also being placed on informal ways of acquiring knowledge. According to modern definitions there are two aspects to the acquisition of knowledge: professional development and the development of the personality of the individual. Even in antiquity, primarily in Ancient Greece, a number of prominent theoreticians and practitioners of education emphasised the importance of obtaining knowledge after the conclusion of "formal" schooling. During the Middle Ages the necessity of advancement in professional knowledge and skills, along with the development of the personality of the individual, were repeatedly emphasised, always taking into account the distinct structure of education for each of the three "orders". A new paradigm of the understanding of learning in non–formal education, which demanded the individualised contact of the faithful with God and their individual reading of the Bible in their mother tongues, was developed during the Reformation. The idea of acquiring knowledge through non–formal education and its methods was adopted and further improved by the most important Slovene Protestant, Primož Trubar, whose spelling–books and catechisms were designed to enable everyone to learn to read, irrespective of their age. Also significant was his call for constant reading of the Bible

throughout the life of an individual, thereby placing the emphasis on personal development and progress.

Keywords: formal education, non–formal education, non–formal learning, informal learning, lifelong learning, Ancient Greece, Middle Ages, Reformation, Primož Trubar, professional development, personal development

Introduction

Towards the end of the twentieth century, new focuses and requirements began to develop with increasing intensity in the field of education. Much of the interest in this field is centred on adult education, training and learning. As a result, the understanding of learning and education is also changing, and there is a clear shift of emphasis from formal modes and methods of acquiring knowledge and skills to more informal ones. An important role is also beginning to be played by knowledge which the individual acquires informally, but which nevertheless influences the individual's development and personality (cf. Knowles et al. 2005).

The concept of lifelong learning began to gain a foothold in the second half of the twentieth century. According to this concept, the individual learns and acquires a variety of knowledge even after the completion of his or her formal education, regardless of the level and scope of formal education; in this way, the individual effectively continues to acquire and develop knowledge and skills until the end of his or her life (cf. Jarvis 2004, 2007, Smith 2001). Although the concept of lifelong learning is a relatively modern idea, this does not mean that learning, irrespective of its form, was not present at all stages of life even before this, or that individual authors in the past have not called for something of this kind (e.g. Dewey 1916/1948) or even elaborated a detailed concept in this regard (e.g. Comenius 1966).

The concept of lifelong education/learning

The end of the 1970s saw one of the first influential definitions of lifelong education, in accordance with which lifelong education should be understood as a process of personal, social and professional development over the course of the life of the individual, for the purpose of improving quality of life (cf. Jarvis 2004, 64). Towards the middle of the 1990s a shift from continuing education towards lifelong learning may be observed (cf. Tight 2002, 39–42). In the opinion of Jarvis (2004, 47), lifelong

education should go beyond the distinction between initial and continuing education, where in the EU context a certain amount of confusion occurs in the field of terminology.

The requirement of learning throughout life was defined and, to a certain extent, globalised by UNESCO in the 1970s (cf. Jarvis 2004, Watterston 2006). Learning throughout life was supposed to

> "open up opportunities for learning for all, for many different purposes – offering [adults] a second or third chance, satisfying their desire for knowledge and beauty or their desire to surpass themselves" (Delors 1996, 103).

No one should understand efforts to acquire knowledge simply as a means for the realisation of a specific purpose. Quite the opposite, knowledge should be understood as an end in itself (ibid, 133). On this basis the four "pillars" on which the concept of lifelong education/learning needs to be established and developed were defined (ibid, 78–89):

- Learning to know: a sufficiently broad general education and the possibility of in–depth work on a selected number of subjects.
- Learning to do: learning to do a job of work and broader competences.
- Learning to live together: developing an understanding of others, respecting the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace.
- Learning to be: development of personality and the ability to act independently, sensibly and responsibly.

Quite a number of definitions exist of formal, non–formal and informal education or learning (cf. Colley et al. 2002). As Rogers reminds us, in 1968 Coombs defined the concept of non–formal education in the context of the widespread feeling that education was failing [...], not just in developing countries but also in so–called Western (or Northern) societies as well. [...] In the West, the reform movement took different forms, but in all planning and policy–making in relation to education in developing countries from 1968 until about 1986, non–formal education was seen as the panacea for all the ills of education in those societies. [...] Most aid agencies included non–formal education in their portfolio of interventions, and the sums spent on it [...] were substantial. By many non–formal education was seen as the "ideal" form of education, far better in all respects than formal education. (Rogers 2004)

The tripartite categorisation of education from 1974 looked like this (cf. Smith 2012, Tight 2002, 70–71):

- Formal education: the hierarchically structured "education system" running from primary school to university and including specialised programmes and institutions for technical and professional training.
- Non–formal education: any organised educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.
- Informal education: the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment (from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the marketplace, the library and the mass media).

The problem with this categorisation was that it used the term "informal education" and not "informal learning", where education was understood as "planned and purposeful learning" while at the same time informal education was defined as "all that learning that goes on outside of any planned learning situation – such as cultural events" (Rogers 2004).

The European Union began to define lifelong learning, one of its important functions, in various documents at the end of the twentieth century (cf. Jarvis 2007, 69–70). It was not, however, conceptualised until the publication of a document entitled *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* in 2000. In the context of the European Union, the guidelines presented in the *Memorandum* became the foundation for the understanding and conception of activities relating to education and learning throughout life.

The *Memorandum* sets out two tasks/aims for lifelong education or learning: the promotion of active citizenship (i.e. participation in all spheres of social and economic life and the extent to which people feel they belong to and have a say in the society in which they live) and the promotion of employability (i.e. the capacity to secure and keep employment as a condition that underpins independence, self–respect and well–being) (ibid, 5). The guiding principle for the designers of the European concept of lifelong learning is that lifelong learning "sees all learning as a seamless continuum 'from cradle to grave'" (ibid, 8). The concept of lifelong learning can only be realised if individuals are motivated to learn. Similarly, everyone should be able to follow open learning pathways of their own choice, which means a redefinition of our understanding of education and training systems, since these should adapt to individual needs and demands rather than the other way round (cf. ibid, 7–8). Special attention is devoted to active citizenship and professional

development, i.e. employability, while the personal development and growth of the individual are not mentioned. Very broadly speaking, active citizenship could be characterised as a component that partially encourages the development of the individual's personality (cf. Jarvis 2007, 71). Nevertheless, the objective of the concept of lifelong learning as conceived by the European Union is perhaps somewhat questionable; for while the two aims mentioned may coincide and even support one another, the possibility nevertheless exists that a component or function which is pragmatic, utilitarian and interested only in economic aspects may prevail. The possibility of the reduction of goals relating to the development and personal growth of the individual is a considerable one in the present age. The efforts of countries are unfortunately oriented above all towards increasing economic growth, the economisation of society and the reduction of those segments of education that are oriented towards the formation and further development of the human being as a human being and as an individual.

Lifelong learning should not exist merely to increase the possibility of employment and career development. It should either give relatively equal consideration to both components, or it should place greater emphasis on the development of the personality as defined by the three points of the UNESCO programme, i.e. for knowledge (general and specialist education), for respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace, and for autonomous and responsible behaviour. A personality which develops these characteristics will also be more employable than a personality in which the focus of education and development is on employability and professional competences. Below we shall look at the informal acquisition of knowledge, and the importance of such knowledge, in Classical antiquity (in ancient Greece and Rome), in the Middle Ages and during the Reformation.

Greece

In ancient Greece the understanding of education derived from two functions which can be traced back to the Archaic period, namely education as the personal, moral development of the individual and education as preparation for a career or practical work. In questions of the education and moral development of the individual, consideration of the formation or shaping of the "higher" person was present (cf. Schwenk 1996, 182). The expression they used for this, the equivalent of the phrase "upbringing and education" in modern terminology, was *paideía.* Over time *paideía* ceased to refer only to the education of children and

increasingly began to be used to denote the process of development and "formation" of the individual in the broadest sense (both informative and formative and as personal growth and spiritual development), as the result of educational endeavours that last throughout an individual's life (cf. Marrou 1965, Schwenk 1996). The Romans would later adopt from the Greeks this conception of the importance of education for human life, and of the aim of education.

The aim of education in the Classical period was to raise the individual to be a "complete" human being. It endeavoured to shape body and soul, emotions and intellect, character and spirit. People in the ancient world were, however, aware of the antinomy between demands for education of the body to the exclusion of all else and, on the other hand, demands for education of the spirit (cf. Vidmar 2009, 37). A balance between these two components was never fully achieved in practice. It always remained an ideal which, however, was never renounced (cf. Juvenal and Persius 1928, 218).

In the Archaic, Homeric period, preparation for an occupation was the fundamental principle of education both for the common people and for the nobility, while the development and formation of moral characteristics or virtues was only "envisaged" for the nobility. The principal goal or ideal to the achievement of which an individual's entire life was directed, was *areté* (virtue). For Homer's heroes *areté* was what made a man courageous, a hero. The objective criterion by which virtue was measured was glory, which however had to be retained, not merely acquired (cf. Vidmar 1995, 43–44).

The ancient idea disdained the technical, vocational orientation – this was a deliberate rejection, not ignorance, since both Greek and Roman education required the formation of the individual as a person who would one day be capable of doing any kind of work and exercising whatever function he (or she) chose. "Classical" education endeavoured to develop every aspect of the essence of a human being, to enable the individual to meet every demand placed on him or her by life or society, or arising as a consequence of free choice (cf. Marrou 1965, 329).

The ancient Greeks did not – or were not supposed to – learn to read and write and partake of musical and physical education in order to master a skill (*téchne*), in order to become experts and use that skill for gain, but in order to be enriched and shaped by the process, as Plato defines it in his *Protagoras*:

> "[F]or when you took your lessons from each of these it was not in the technical way, with a view to becoming a professional, but for education (*paideía*)" (Plato 1952, 103).

Those who worked hardest to achieve this ideal were those who had time to do so, in other words those who were not burdened by worrying about earning a living. In Ancient Greek, the "creative" free time that was devoted to education, self–improvement and moral development was called *scholé*, and this term could also be used to denote the place where these activities took place.

Plato was one of the first to incorporate into his concept of pedagogy the idea that learning, study and systematic development of the personality should also continue after completion of the process of education. In his vision of the ideal state he envisaged and elaborated, among other things, a precisely defined upbringing and educational path for the individual. He devoted particular attention to the highest classes of the population, i.e. the "guardians" and, in particular, the rulers or "philosopher–kings". He believed that the highest positions in the state should not be occupied by people who were not "able", by which he meant both the uneducated and those who had done nothing but educate themselves and therefore had no contact with reality, with practical life:

"[N]either could men who are uneducated and inexperienced in truth ever adequately preside over a state, nor could those who had been permitted to linger on to the end in the pursuit of culture – the one because they have no single aim and purpose in life to which all their actions, public and private, must be directed, and the others, because they will not voluntarily engage in action, believing that while still living they have been transported to the Islands of the Blest" (Plato 1942, 139).

In accordance with Plato's concept of education, both boys and girls should be educated; he believes that men and women are equally entitled to perform the highest functions in the state, since the differences between them are merely physical and not intellectual (Plato 1937, 447–448). For this reason men and women should undergo the same education and training. If men are given the art of the Muses (*mousiké*) – a term which corresponds to "the arts" in the modern sense of the word and which also includes some elements of what later began to be designated *enkýklios paideía* or well–rounded education – and physical training (*gymnastiké*), then, as Plato says: "Then we must assign these two arts to the women also and the offices of war and employ them in the same way [as the men]" (ibid, 435).

Plato strongly advocates the civic virtues of political life, which should be cultivated and preserved throughout the individual's life. A properly educated individual is one whose education aims at virtue (*areté*) and awakens in the child the desire to become "a perfect citizen, understanding

how both to rule and be ruled righteously" (Plato 1961, 65). He believes that good people are almost certainly the product or result of a correct education, while as he himself says "education [*paideía*] […] stands first among the finest gifts that are given to the best men" (ibid, 65–67). It is also possible for a person to stray from the true path, or for education to be unsuitable. Both these circumstances can be corrected; but each individual must strive for this "so long as he lives, […] with all his might" (ibid, 67). The art of music and physical training are both intended for the development of the human personality, for personal growth (Plato 1937, 287–289).

One of the first thinkers besides Plato to ask himself whether the aim of education was the development of the personality or, rather, the preparation of the individual for work or a profession was Aristotle; whether education should be oriented towards the more realistic, towards life, as he himself says, or be more humanistically oriented, in the direction of virtue (Aristotle, 1959: 637) and therefore reject everything that prevents the attainment of excellence and every form of physical or intellectual specialisation:

> "Also it makes much difference what object one has in view in a pursuit or study; if one follows it for the sake of oneself or one's friends, or on moral grounds [*areté*], it is not illiberal, but the man who follows the same pursuit because of other people would often appear to be acting in a menial and servile manner" (ibid, 639).

Aristotle believes that it is only possible to reach happiness, the highest possible state, or self–fulfilment when at leisure (*scholé*) (Aristotle 2004, 194–196). All work and all occupations, all a man's activities must be directed towards enabling him to enjoy the highest level of life that is possible for him when he is at leisure (Aristotle 1959, 639–641); this exists in pure intellectual activity (*theoría*), which actually means the disinterested search for wisdom and knowledge and does not only contain study and research but also creative endeavours in the field of art and literature and the pleasure that follows consideration of the perfect and the beautiful (cf. Curtis and Boultwood 1970, 42). Education exists simultaneously in the form of shaping (developing) the moral and the spiritual, where it is necessary to observe the following principles (Aristotle 1959, 637–639):

- Of useful things it is necessary to learn the (vitally) necessary.
- Some liberal arts and sciences can also be learnt to a certain extent.

- Nothing should be done either in theory or in practice for the sake of profit or payment, since this deprives the spirit of leisure and demeans it.

Rome

In keeping with their pragmatic, utilitarian philosophy, the Romans had from the earliest days placed preparation for life, i.e. an occupation, ahead of personal development (cf. Marrou 1965, Reble 2004). It was not until the second century BC that Rome began to adopt Greek knowledge and the Greek concept of education, along with the related terminology. Thus it was that the Romans translated *enkýklios paideía* as *artes liberales*, or "liberal arts"; the first to use this expression in the sense of a programme of general education was Cicero (for more on this see Vidmar 2009).

The celebrated orator and rhetorician Quintilian was the first Roman to mention the importance of non–formal education and learning when he stated that "free time" was just as important for the formation of a young man as the hours spent at school in the company of a *paedagogus* (Quintilian 1922, 7–21). At school,

"where there are many pupils, a youth will not only learn what is taught to himself, he will learn what is taught others as well. He will hear many merits praised and many faults corrected" (ibid.).

Quintilian identified the *artes* characteristic of general education of the secondary level with the Greek *paideía*, finally defining the meaning of *enkýklios* as "rounded", and called them "*orbis doctrinae*":

"I will now proceed briefly to discuss the remaining arts in which I think boys ought to be instructed before being handed over to the teacher of rhetoric, for it is by such studies that the circle of education [*orbis doctrinae*] described by the Greeks as ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία will be brought to its full completion" (ibid, 56).

He understood them as the content of those disciplines that are combined in the circle or whole of general, common education, in the sense that they serve no vocational purpose but as "pure" disciplines enable "applied" science and are the basis for the highest science – i.e. rhetoric.

The Middle Ages

One of the characteristics of the Middle Ages was the division of society into three classes, estates or orders (*ordines*), within the framework of which each of these social groups had its own internal structure and was strictly limited in its relationship to the next group (cf. Duby 1985, Riché 1979). The individual order was the centre of specific views and customs, and also of social institutions and institutions of education, which gave a unique character both to clerical education and to the education imparted to the noble or commoner classes. Each of the three estates typically had its own organisation of education or training, which derived from the needs ascribed to the order/estate. We can only really talk about education in the modern sense of the word in the case of education within the order of the clergy. Both the clergy – in particular monks – and the nobility provided, in a specific way, either at the formal level or informally, something that would be defined today as a form of lifelong education/learning.

Education within the order of "those who pray", i.e. the clergy, was devoted above all to satisfying vocational needs, while at the same time it also represented the acquisition of a general education (the Greek *enkýklios paideía* or the Latin *artes liberales*). After completion of the envisaged schooling it is possible to identify, particularly in the case of members of monastic orders, a desire for education or learning to continue. There is also an evident change in the function of learning or education, in that its role should be above all that of personal development and no longer professional development. The foundations for this began to be established in the fifth and sixth centuries, when the founders of monastic orders in Western Europe called for the daily reading of various texts.

The Rule of St Pachomius, written in the fourth century by the founder of cenobitic monasticism, says that an illiterate candidate wishing to enter the monastery should spend three hours a day being taught to read by an older, educated monk:

> "Whoever enters the monastery uninstructed [*rudis*] shall be taught first what he shall observe. [...] And if he is illiterate he shall go [...] to the teacher so delegated and [...] learn with the greatest of eagerness and gratitude. [...] Even if unwilling, he shall be compelled to read! No one whosoever shall be in the monastery who does not learn to read [*discat litteras*]" (Pachomius 1846, 291–292).

With St Benedict of Nursia, the founder of the Benedictine order, the above requirement that monks should devote themselves every day to reading, which actually means that they should learn (and in this way see to their own "personal development"), reaches its apogee. The Rule of St Benedict envisages reading, i.e. learning, as one of the foundations of the monastic life:

"Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore, the brothers should have specified periods for manual labour as well as for prayerful reading" (Benedictus 1847, 703A).

At that time the same rules that applied to monks also applied to nuns (cf. Caesarius Arelatensis 1865, 1109C–D). Centuries later Abbot Smaragdus was of a similar opinion and taught that reading (i.e. learning, education) was what helped a person develop his or her own self:

"All progress is the result of reading [*lectio*] and reflection [*meditatio*]. [...] Reading the Holy Scriptures is a twofold gift. It educates the understanding of the mind [*intellectum mentis*] [...]. In a certain way the Bible grows with its readers. Unlearned readers [*rudes lectores*] come to know it, while the learned [*docti*] constantly discover it anew" (Smaragdus 1851, 597C–598A).

Writers in later centuries repeated these ideas and maintained them.

The sons of the nobility, the order of "those who make war" were rarely sent to school if they were able–bodied and suitable for a military career. One of the reasons for this is the fact that from their earliest youth these children had to be educated and trained in a manner entirely different from that which was customary in existing schools (which were organised and conducted by the clergy) (cf. Odo Cluniacensis 1853, 645A). During their training these youths frequently tested their strength and knowledge against those of their peers. During the course of his "education" or training, a young nobleman had to complete three stages (cf. Good and Teller 1969, Müller–Freienfels 1932, Specht 1895, 232): the page (roughly seven years old; he learned to serve the table, hunt game and play chess); the squire (roughly 14 years old; care of a knight's weapons and horse, continuation of training in the skills of a page); and the knight (roughly 20 years old; the young man becomes a knight in a special ceremony and receives a sword and spurs, the symbols of knightly rank). The members of the order of "those who make war", i.e. the nobility, the knights, were required to train constantly in order to maintain their condition and their

skill at handling their weapons. They did this right up until old age, or for as long as they were capable.

In the Middle Ages the daughters of noble families for the most part acquired essential knowledge at home, where they were taught by tutors. Although knowledge of Latin was still important, their attention increasingly began to be drawn by love songs and chivalric romances in vernacular languages. A typical example of the education of a noblewoman can be found in *Tristan* by Gottfried von Strassburg, where the author describes the education of Isolde. As a child she began to be educated by the family chaplain in reading, writing, French and Latin; the court minstrel taught her courteous behaviour, the harp, singing, letter–writing and the writing of *chansons* (Strassburg 1873, 7965–8145, Specht 1895).

Even within the order of "those who work", i.e. ordinary working people or commoners, there were differences between the individual subgroups into which this order was divided. Generally speaking peasants had the lowest status. In the case of the peasant population, education in the broadest sense of the word was limited to two functions: practical preparation for life, which was the responsibility of parents or guardians; and the moral formation of individuals, which was the responsibility of the clergy (cf. Limmer 1958, Riché 1979). For a long time the fear of idolatry meant that there were no statues in churches. Over time, however, the Church began to accept painted and carved images, which were also known as the Poor Man's Bible or "mute sermon". Their purpose was to help the simple faithful better understand biblical themes (cf. Dhondt 1968, Grundmann 1958, Riché 1979, Specht 1895). All clerics, who knew the importance of rhetoric, saw the sermon as the most effective means of recruiting people to the Christian cause. Sermons in the vernacular have for the most part not been preserved; in their instructions to priests regarding preaching, bishops ordered that those priests who "knew" the Bible should explain it, while the others should persuade the people to reject evil, do good and strive for peace (cf. Riché 1979, 323–324).

The Reformation

By calling for the establishing of individualised contact with God and the reading of the Bible by the faithful themselves in their own mother tongues, the Reformation established a new paradigm for the understanding of learning throughout life which also implies specific components of the modern concept of lifelong education/learning. German Protestant teachers devoted most of their attention to the secondary stage of education while

also giving some regard to the tertiary stage, above all because of the great shortage of educated people, i.e. teachers and clergy, and involved themselves very little or hardly at all with teaching literacy and other forms of adult education and learning.

Martin Luther, the father and leading representative of the Reformation, realised relatively early on that in order to spread the faith and preserve the various ecclesiastical and secular professions a reorganisation of schooling and education in general was urgently necessary. He believed that upbringing and education were a matter for the three fundamental institutions of society, namely family, school and church, each of which had its own mission and its own tasks, duties and rights (cf. Bertin 1961, Roth 1898). Luther publicly intervened in the field of education with his own authority when it became clear that despite all the good intentions and the possibilities of individualisation of religion, people would not of their own impulse enable the education of their children and send them to school, while at the same time nobody would voluntarily maintain schools.

In 1520, in an open letter to the German nobility entitled To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate, Luther expressed the desire that boys and girls should study the Bible for at least one hour every day (cf. Luther 1520/1975). Four years later, in 1524, he wrote a circular entitled To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools, in which he places the responsibility for schooling and education in the broadest sense on the civic authorities (cf. Luther 1524/1975). One of the most important tasks of the secular authorities should be that wherever possible they establish schools for boys and girls in which they can be educated for an hour or two each day. Luther believes that unfortunately most parents are unfitted for this work and do not know how to train and teach their children themselves. On the other hand, even if parents were able and willing to teach their children themselves, they have neither the time nor the opportunity for it, what with their other duties and housework. Necessity therefore compels them, at least the more wealthy among them, to engage simple teachers. He goes on to say that although everyone may wish to train and instruct his daughters and sons himself, it is very likely that the result of this process would be a blockhead. But if children were instructed and trained in schools where there were learned and well–trained schoolmasters and schoolmistresses to teach the languages, "the other arts", where they would hear the history and the sayings of all the world, they could form their own opinions and adapt themselves to the course of this outward life in the "fear of God". Luther believes that

"the training which is undertaken at home, apart from such schools,
attempts to make us wise through our own experience; before that comes to
pass we shall be dead a hundred times over; for much time is needed to
acquire one's own experience" (ibid, 172–174).

During the Reformation the prevailing conditions in what is today
Slovenia differed from those in Germany. The provincial rulers (who had
legislative and administrative power) were Habsburgs, who had remained
Catholic, while the nobility was predominantly Protestant or at least
favourably disposed towards Protestantism. As a result, the provincial
nobility had great difficulties enforcing certain demands which, in places
where the provincial ruler or national sovereign was a Protestant, were
almost self–evident or lay within the competence of the local ruler or
Landesfürst (ecclesiastical matters, the organisation of education, financial
matters, etc.).

The establishing of Protestantism in Carniola also faced problems of a
linguistic nature on quite a large scale, particularly among the broader
classes of the population, since the mainly rural population mostly spoke
Slovene, the language of the educated classes and schools was still
humanistic Latin, and the ruling classes generally communicated amongst
themselves in German. For this reason, the work of Slovene Protestants in
the field of establishing the Slovene language as the language of books, of
education and of culture was all the more important. Particular mention
should be made here of Primož Trubar, who justified his calls for the
organisation of education with reasons that were different from, or
additional to, those used by Protestants in Germany. German was already
established in Germany as a mother tongue and as a written language. It
had its own linguistic norms and the Germans already had educated
individuals who were also active in their mother tongue. This is actually
one of the more important reasons why Luther himself wanted people to
be able to read the Bible in their mother tongue and in this way establish
an individual contact with God. His desire for both boys and girls to attend
school for an hour or two each day for the purposes of elementary literacy
was in order to enable this. Besides the desire for direct communication
between every individual and the Holy Scriptures and God in their mother
tongue, Trubar at the same time had to strive to establish Slovene as a
written norm and to raise the general level of culture of the inhabitants of
the Slovene lands. Here we can state without doubt that in the case of
Trubar and his intense commitment to the establishing of schools and the
education of children, and also of adults, something he shared with other
Slovene Protestants, there was, in addition to the prevailing religious

impulse, a sincere desire to raise "simple Slovenes" from their cultural backwardness (cf. Rupel 1951. 112, Schmidt 1986, 206).

Trubar's efforts to teach as many "dear Slovenes" as possible to read and write, an endeavour which included not only children and youths but adults as well, were among the most notable not only in Carniola or Slovenia but in the Protestant countries in general. The foreword to his 1550 *Abecedarium* contained the following explanation:

> "Therefore I, who have placed myself before you Slovenes as a spiritual leader, have transcribed into this little book some of the more important teachings of our true faith. In them I have also wished to show an easy and brief route *by which anyone can soon learn to read*" [author's emphasis] (Trubar 1555/2002a, 285).

He continued this desire to educate all people in his *Catechism* of 1555, which for the sake of easier comprehension and legibility he had printed in the Latin alphabet. Trubar believed that both young and old could quickly and without difficulty learn to read and write:

> "And it also seems to us that our Slovene language may be written more beautifully and read more easily with these Latin letters. For these reasons we have allowed our Abecedarium and this brief catechism to be printed a second time with Latin letters. From this Abecedarium many of your dear little children, and also older people, can easily and quickly learn to read and write" [author's emphasis] (Trubar 1555/2002a, 331).

In this context it is also necessary to mention the development of his educational ambitions, when he noted on the title page of the *Abecedarium* of 1555 that it could be used to quickly learn to read and write: "Abecedarium. A little book from which young and simple Slovenes can easily and quickly learn to read and write" [author's emphasis] (Trubar 1555/2002b, 311), while in the *Abecedarium* of 1550 he only emphasised learning to read (cf. Trubar 1550/2002a, 311 and 281).

In the case of Trubar we can also identify the non–formal learning of a "foreign" language by adults, which is also one of the components of adult education. In his work *Svetiga Pavla listuvi* [Letters of St Paul] he addressed the ladies of Carniola, Lower Styria, Carinthia and Gorizia with the following words:

> "Your castles, courts and houses contain Bibles and other devotional works in German and Slovene. [...] Some of you, born in Austria, Upper Styria and Tyrol have also learnt Slovene from them [author's emphasis] and taught others to read it" (Trubar in Rupel 1966, 195).

In the context of understanding the purpose, aims and role of education, Slovene Protestants did not differ in principle from their German counterparts, which means that the chief emphasis and attention were devoted to the secondary stage of education, above all in order to satisfy the needs for personnel, in other words to provide suitably educated ecclesiastical and secular officials. Primary education, such as it was, therefore remained at the level of the most basic literacy, designed to enable the individual to have an individual contact with God. With the exception of Trubar, Slovene Protestant pedagogical writers and other theoreticians did not deal particularly with questions of education and learning after the completion of formal schooling, which is nothing unusual given that the norms of written Slovene and written expression were only just being established at that time.

In Trubar's case we can identify both components of adult education, i.e. literacy, and components of the modern concept of lifelong learning. As he himself says, he designed his own works so that everyone could learn from them, regardless of age, young and old alike.

Conclusion

It was not until the twentieth century that adult learning began to be the object of more widespread and in–depth consideration on the part of theoreticians and practitioners of education. In past periods the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in adults was, for the most part, an issue that regarded those who had already completed formal education, and was less connected to the question of basic literacy. Even so, it is possible to identify individual components of lifelong learning in every period of history. In ancient Greece moral education was pre–eminent. The Greeks did not strive to educate and form writers, artists, scholars, but human beings, individuals who conformed to a prescribed norm. The Classical Greek concept regarded above all the human being as such, not the technician or expert trained for a specific yet partial function. The aim was to educate or form an individual who would be able, if and when this was necessary, to acquire specific specialist knowledge. In some periods one component or function would predominate; in others it would be the turn of another. The importance of the development of the individual's personality, as it is today understood by the theory of lifelong learning, was particularly emphasised by Plato and Aristotle, who actually shaped the Classical concept and ideal of upbringing and education and its subsequent development in the Hellenistic period.

In the Middle Ages the driving force behind education in the broadest sense of the world was above all religious. Influential church thinkers required monks and other clergy to read the Bible and other "holy books" as part of the development of the personality of the individual, while the strengthening of piety was above all left to prayer. One of the characteristics of this period was the tripartite division of society, where separate rules of education and training applied to each of the classes or estates. It would be difficult to talk about a single model, since they differed both in their aims and in the methods and means they employed. Within the clerical estate, education combined professional development (in the sense of preparation for a career) with the personal development of the individual – or spiritual development as it would have been called in the Middle Ages. Here we note the alternation and complementarity of both functions of the modern understanding of lifelong education and learning, including in its non–formal and informal guises. Of the noble estate we may say that modern notions of lifelong learning can be identified in the form of uninterrupted training in military and athletic skills, which was a condition for the successful practice of the "profession" of knight. If we consider modern conceptions of lifelong learning in the broadest possible sense, then we can also include the estate of commoners – i.e. peasants – in the sense of the development of personality. Sermons on Sundays and other feasts days meant that peasants received regular moral instruction from the clergy.

Protestantism brought with it the requirement for the faithful to read the Bible and other (suitable) books throughout their lives. The reasons given for this included the formation or development of the individual's personality. We can agree without hesitation that this was essentially the same justification that was given in the Middle Ages. We could, however, point out, as a significant difference between the medieval and Protestant notions of the development of the personality of the individual, that with Protestantism the demand for reading is democratised and transferred from the narrow group of the holy – i.e. the clergy – to all people, in other words to all classes of the population. At the same time the language of education and literature also changes: it is no longer only Latin but the mother tongue of the readers or those who are being educated. Essentially we can say that the Reformation and the principle of the democratisation of education (not least with regard to the methods and forms of its provision) marked the start of a process that reached one of its peaks in the second half of the seventeenth century with Comenius and his concept of learning throughout life, and another in contemporary concepts and understandings of lifelong education and learning in all its various forms.

We may also say that Primož Trubar was one of the few Protestants to come close to the modern concept of lifelong education or learning.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE INFORMAL ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

DRAGO B. ROTAR

Abstract

The main focus of the article is the elaboration of the notion (and the field of objects) of the "informal acquisition of knowledge" in various discourses dealing with the transmission of symbolic constitutions in human societies – either in the form of "personality development", complementarity and competitiveness between the institutionalised segment of transmission practices and hypothetically non–controlled, spontaneous processes in the formations of individuals (always simultaneously members of more than one social group) or in the form of culture and cultural transmissions. The word "informal" therefore does not mean "non–formal" but something else, namely something that informs itself, something that receives its form. This form, however, is always only recognisable among the informed.

Keywords: informal education, enculturation, socialisation, acculturation, assimilation

Introduction[1]

I do not intend to address the topic contained in the title in terms of implementation, or from the "practical" point of view, for two reasons. The first is that despite several decades of educational practice this "acquisition of knowledge" is a somewhat undifferentiated mass, a kind of

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[1] The "informal acquisition of knowledge". This is the main theme of the article: extrainstitutional education. *Informal* education is an *essential part of the formation and functioning* of the individual's autonomy and is likewise the *essential basis of every intellectual activity*, including, and in equal measure, the sciences and arts.

repository for everything that controlled and utilitarian educational practices do not cover or are unable to classify on the scales of the notions and values that they contain. This of course does not mean that there is no scientific or specialist literature on the subject. On the contrary, there is a suspiciously large amount, and it is extremely incoherent. Two fundamental orientations may be observed in this literature: in the first, informal education is a kind of dumping ground or rubbish tip which needs to be cleared up and put in order, its contents classified into recyclable material and waste material, and then dealt with accordingly. For the second, this kind of education is a refuge for that which has remained unalienated and spontaneous in hyper–regulated and hyper–institutionalised late capitalist society. Such literature has rather less to say about the scientific conceptualisation of this field, or rather, its scientific conceptualisation is dealt with by literature that is not concerned with the "acquisition of knowledge" as a field of regulation, conquest or edification, moralising, communitarianism, etc., but instead as the social practice of transmissions and cognition, with regard to which "education" is merely that detail from the mass of social symbolic transactions that is privileged by the "visions" of those who are enabled by such a division to be where they are in the distribution of positions in society. On the one hand one is dismayed at the idea of the whole depth of society being occupied by narrow–minded pedants and speculators, yet on the other it is also true that "beautiful souls" are hardly more beneficial for the future of humanity, since they too eliminate something which protects societies from anomie, in other words from dissolution and restructuring into a totalitarian machinery: the social autonomies that sanction the heterogeneity of the life of society. Suddenly the "informal acquisition of knowledge" has an entirely different weight when compared to flowery phrases about "the knowledge society" and the like, all the more so since a rigorous definition of this object shows that it is a continuum which – as regards the fundamental attitude towards objects and general conditions for activities such as passionate interest, separation from the interests of the currently hegemonic, intimate satisfaction and relative equanimity with regard to the reception of the cultural/social environment – connects *bricolage* with scientific cognition and artistic creation.

The informal and the anthropological

The conception of the non–formal acquisition of knowledge, or learning which is not like school learning yet is the most substantial collective and individual process in the formation of individuals, remains,

despite its undoubted importance, somewhat hazy. This is something observed by practically everyone who addresses this topic in one way or another. It is not possible, for example, to separate it from the topic of the development of the human being from early childhood to old age. Understanding of the phenomenon ought to be facilitated by two networks of concepts: the social or cultural anthropological, and the cultural psychological. Both networks contain an important predisposition for comparison. Nevertheless it may be said that the cultural psychological network of concepts is less suitable for the consideration of this material, since it inevitably generalises on the basis of an ambiguous conception of normality or the alternation of two types of normality (statistical and normative), which are an integral part of descriptive and applied psychology (child psychology, adolescent psychology, psychology of other age groups), which in my opinion needs to be avoided. Yet even if we discount the participation of cultural psychology, this does not mean that we should also discount consideration of mental phenomena. Conceptual tools exist for this both under the aegis of social or cultural anthropology itself and outside it, for example in psychoanalysis, which is more oriented towards exploration than schematised application. Last but not least, the informal acquisition of knowledge, self–education and self–culture are practically synonyms for enculturation and socialisation. They relate to the modalities of the processes which these two concepts subsume, and not to a sporadic similarity which, although it arouses a certain curiosity, is in fact unimportant.

This means, in fact, that it is epistemologically and theoretically inadmissible to consider the informal acquisition of knowledge as a peripheral activity outside the mainstream of intentional education that is contained in the visible and legally institutionalised ideological apparatuses imposed by state or religious authorities, since informal education is that mass of social formative activity on which these apparatuses float like a kind of rash. This is also the extent of their role in the formation of the personality. Similarly, there is no reason for such a disparaging reduction of the scope and power of the informal acquisition of knowledge, since it is a process which belongs among the existential and automatic activities of the social corpus. There is also the field of scientific research, within which, generally speaking, it may be considered, and which has at its disposal its own theoretical frameworks, reflection on methods in connection with the selection of paradigms, and a mass of empirical data suitable for classification and comparison. All of this exists irrespective of whether we intend to address informal education in a consequent manner or continue to push it away among the peripheral

activities of human life. Only the connection and comparison of these
social formative processes with the processes that take place in politically
established educational institutions – which shape them and set their goals
in the interests of the socially least specific, i.e. political, social
organisation, which, although it produces aspects of its totality, is, with
regard to the whole of the human individual and the life of society, merely
a form which in limited doses is inevitable, although mutable, in Western
and certain other societies, but is not present in alternative societies or
exists in various other states and aspects – can enable pertinent research.
As an illustration of the process of total control – for this is what it is
about: control at almost any cost, a cost which must be paid by those who
are controlled, in extreme cases by extermination – we may cite the
attempts of the institutions of the ideological apparatuses and their
showcase disciplines (certain types of psychology, sociology, pedagogy
which are converted into social techniques with which to dominate people
and society) to control even those spheres of life which, even in Western
societies, were until recently exempt from control. Of social symbolic
practices, artistic creation in particular – which in normal circumstances is
permitted simply by a certain amount of technical knowledge, which at the
same time represents an intervention by the institutions of the
Establishment (in music, painting, literature, etc.) – is increasingly passing
under psychological and ideological control via courses for various
standardised "creative" activities, from writing to dance. This is an
intervention in the sphere of activities which every oppressive regime in
history has desired, but which until now has only ever been realised on a
very limited scale, even when it was most successful.

     Human development is anything but a merely biological or merely
psychological category and, as I have already mentioned, it lasts our whole
life. It is of course possible to intervene in it, and in several different ways.
To date, the most common form of such intervention has been
ac[c]ulturation. In its Slovene spelling, the word *akulturacija* is highly
ambiguous, since it stands for two words in English and French which are
homophones but have different spellings and mean two very different
things: these words are *aculturation* and *acculturation*. The former
expression denotes conditions in which people do not know the references
of the group to which they belong or with which they identify (nation,
regional society, age class, profession, place of residence, etc.). This
expression belongs to the context of migrations and the disappearance of a
culture. *Aculturation* in this sense is among the main causes of poor
performance at school and failure to integrate in other institutions and,
above all, other sociocultural environments. *Acculturation*, on the other

hand, which must not be confused with the former expression, means cultural adaptation. Acculturation can be described as a set of phenomena which are the consequence of constant direct contact between people of different cultures and which cause changes in the original cultural model of one or all of the cultures in contact. One–sided acculturation is actually not possible, since where such contact exists it is impossible for the other culture not to change too, though while some cultures change semi–consciously and by force of circumstances, others change unwittingly and unconsciously (for example the culture of colonial masters). In no case, however, it is possible to consider either aculturation or acculturation as assimilation: the cultures involved remain distinguishable despite ac[c]ulturational changes. Anthropology deals with both aculturation and acculturation: both are processes which shape the mentality and the *imaginary* of individuals. The difference is that the former means a defeat in a cultural conflict, which is more destructive for the individual the more irreducible it is, since because of it the individual finds himself in a world which does not recognise him, in other words, in which he has no identity. The conditions which arise as a result of *aculturation* of course require the intervention of the environment, in such a way as to facilitate *acculturation*. If *aculturation* (with one C) is a kind of dead–end street which forces the individual to persist with increasingly degraded cultural forms, *acculturation* (with two Cs) encompasses a whole range of forms and effects.[2]

Transmission and coherence

Be that as it may, the processes that enable people to coexist, in other words existence and intellectual activity, have a lot to do with the

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[2] Roger Bastide, for example, distinguishes between at least three types of acculturation (with two Cs): spontaneous acculturation, when cultures are in free contact; forced acculturation, which is organised and imposed by one social/cultural group, as in the case of colonisation or slavery; and planned, controlled acculturation, through which a new (proletarian, national) culture is supposed to be formed (Bastide 1948, 1950 and 1970). Anthropology usually divides acculturation into three types, if we do not include assimilation, as follows: syncretisation or cross–fertilisation (a combination of the original culture and the new culture), multiculturalism (the coexistence of several cultures without combination or cross–fertilisation) and finally counter–acculturation (a refusal and rejection of the new culture or a return to the original culture). Within this classification, both multiculturalism and counter–acculturation are a kind of hypothetical ideal state which in reality does not exist "in a pure form".

development of personality in the social/cultural environment, i.e. with
acculturation with two Cs, and the processes of civilisation, to use Elias's
expression (Elias 1939, Duerr 1998); they have a lot to do with what we
call the informal acquisition of knowledge. For this reason it is all the
more important that we eliminate as quickly and as thoroughly as possible
all the ambiguities that we can: just as we must avoid confusing
aculturation and acculturation, we must make sure that we do not confuse
either of these two phenomena with assimilation, even though from a
certain point of view assimilation can be considered an extreme example
of acculturation (with 2 Cs). Assimilation in fact means that as a result of
the activities of groups that are in an acculturational relationship, the
culture of the group that has assimilated and internalised the culture and
way of life of the other group with which it is in acculturational contact
has disappeared completely. Complete assimilation does not necessarily
involve violence on the part of the stronger group, but it is always the
result of its economic, political, organisational or cultural predominance
over a longer period: thus the ac[c]ulturation of the European Jews was
successful (if either phenomenon actually occurred it was aculturation
with one C, i.e. the denial or degradation of the common culture of the
Jews as a religious group, and the pinning of the entire group to a religion
discredited in the Christian world) or actually unnecessary, since the Jews
have in one way or another been a component of European cultures for as
long as it has been possible to talk about European cultures,[3] while the
then Latin Church did not succeed in assimilating the cultural–religious
group created in the 11th century through manipulation, in other words in
Christianising it, for various reasons, among them the fact that Latin
Christianity needed an enemy that was near at hand and "defeated" in
order to create the coherence of the Christian world and demonstrate its
predominance (Delumeau 1996, Delumeau 1983, Poliakoff 1988, Fabre–
Vassas 1994, Doubnov 1994).

   Two concepts which are at least apparently close to extreme forms of
acculturation with two Cs, according to the typology I have indicated, in
other words assimilation, are genocide and ethnocide. Genocide physically
eliminates the bearers of the other culture, language, religion or ideology

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[3] It is actually not entirely clear what is meant by European culture, since it
probably took shape in the feudal era after the Crusades had made the unity of the
Mediterranean impossible, while its more or less evident polymorphism did not
become important until the second half of the 19th century when newly formed (or
invented, "reborn" or "reawakened") nations uniformly attributed to themselves
authentic ethnic–national traditions (cf. Rotar 2007, Kramberger 2007, Hobsbawm
and Ranger 1983, Anderson 1991, Mosse 1975, Thiesse 1999).

and does not lead to the problem of acculturation in the acculturated group, since once the operation is completed the group no longer exists. Instead it leads to the problem of the constitution of genocidal groups, which also contains the issue of the informal acquisition of knowledge. A genocidal group does not, for example, see itself as a band of assassins, but as a chosen group which has carried out, on behalf of a larger community, actions which, though prohibited, have a redemptive nature and are pleasing to God or the nation. The future constitution of the reference group depends on whether it accepts this image or rejects it. Acculturation processes (meaning either a modification of the culture of the reference group or its defence) which lead in one or the other direction take place to large extent as informal education by word–of–mouth and general opinion.

Ethnocide is not simply incomplete genocide. It cannot in fact be said either that genocide is a "final solution" for all who participate in it, or that between genocide and ethnocide there is not an irreducible difference: if ethnocide is a crime, it is one of a different type and category from genocide. Ethnocide is in fact the systematic destruction of the culture of a specific ethnic or similar group (the concept probably needs to be extended to subcultures and minority cultures, for example intellectuals, who are frequently the object of efforts that are similar, if not identical, to ethnocide in the "civilised" and less civilised world, irrespective of ethnic attributes). Consequently, the term needs to be renamed and conceptually supplemented. Until this happens, we shall continue to use it, with all the appropriate caveats, while remaining aware that the definitions and basic descriptions can be applied to a whole series of similar phenomena. The most important characteristic is that the socially dominant group (which is seldom the largest group) rejects acculturation with two Cs, perhaps because it does not have the necessary potential or cultural capital for it (although this is only one of the possible reasons), and instead sees the total subordination of the social corpus as a condition for its domination. It therefore attacks the designated group through stigmatisation and via external emblems or characteristics which may be summarised by the expression "way of life". Not content with this, however, it attempts to eliminate the entire mental and ethical constitution of the designated group. Ethnocide is thus a deliberately triggered and programmed deculturation which does not have the fundamental characteristics of acculturation with two Cs; the latter in fact requires the forced or voluntary acquiescence of the subjects of acculturation, and at the same time is a process in which all participating parties are changed, each in its own way. Ethnocide or attacks on other social groups, on the other hand,

occur so that the dominant group can homogenise the population of the group in which it is dominant without undergoing change itself, above all so as not to have to share social power in the area in which it is master.

One further anthropological concept which needs to be taken into account in connection with the informal acquisition of knowledge is that of enculturation. Enculturation needs to be carefully distinguished from inculturation, which is a concept from Christian, particularly Catholic, doctrine and missionary practice. In this religious context (in other, non–religious contexts it does not mean anything) it means ways of adapting the "blessed proclamation" of the Christian Gospels (the English term for the Greek *euangelion* or "good news") which missionaries are supposed to spread in non–Christian environments. The term came to prominence in the 18th century with the liturgical dispute that arose when the Catholic authorities devoted their attention to the liturgy used by the Jesuits in China. The only reason I mention inculturation is to avoid even accidental confusion of a term that belongs to theology with the anthropological term "enculturation" which Margaret Mead proposed to characterise the social processes of the formation of individuals (i.e. the members of a given social group), in other words the formative procedures by means of which social groups transmit cultural forms, moral norms and values to their children from birth onwards (Mead 1973), within which the informal acquisition of knowledge is absolutely predominant. Enculturation is not of course a discovery of Margaret Mead's: M. J. Herskovits was already writing about it in the 1940s. He defined it as the process through which throughout his life the individual assimilates the traditions of his group and acts according to the dictates of these traditions (Herskovits, 1967; also Washburn, 2008). While enculturation partly coincides with the education of members of the group before the transition to adulthood, it does not end with this transition, since institutionalised education, where it exists, is only a small part of this process. In the period before adulthood, the group thus equips the individual with a basic form of the culture in which he will live. Above all, it teaches him to handle the verbal symbols that make up his language and master the forms of behaviour that are considered appropriate within the culture of the group, and prepares him to reconcile himself with life goals, adapt to relevant institutions, etc. In all this, the individual, in Herkovits's opinion, is entirely passive, has no say, and is more a tool than an actor.

The field of social processes and the activities of the individual which make up the phenomenon that we call the informal acquisition of knowledge is consequently included in the group of interconnected anthropological conceptions which explain what is clearly the most

widespread human activity and the actions and objects within it, roughly corresponding to the concept of "human development". For this reason, the discipline whose basis is the comparative research of this development, which is usually called "cross–cultural psychology" and "*psychologie interculturelle*", and which long ago established that "human development" is not one single process (Dasen 1999), although every process is involved, not as a passive factor but as a co–determining factor, in the biological growing up of individuals of all cultures, is actually, in terms of content, goals and, to a large extent, research procedures, part of cultural and social anthropology.[4] Research into this field of human life should not be psychological, and psychology should not be normative, so as to enable these findings to be the basis for pedagogical and political reflection, particularly reflection which sees its applications in a constructive confrontation with the cultural diversity of the school population and other populations in which the authorised pedagogical profession intervenes in the societies of the "civilised world", something which can be achieved through the suitable education (but not the training and intimidation) of teachers (Dasen 1988, 1991, 1992 and 2000b).

Episteme and social practice

The cognitive basis which is taking shape in the scientific field of today's non–biological anthropology also enables a cognitive distance within the pedagogical doctrine which is the origin of the regulation of that part of education which is implemented or at least supervised by the modern state in the so–called Western world, and establishes relationships with that part of the social formation of individuals which is sooner or later beyond its reach, and of course in the practical pedagogy which derives from this doctrine and is confirmed by it. In short, a cognitive basis which can only be reached through scientific research and which does not relate to human life merely in one culture or in different cultures of the same type (which are actually in most cases a single culture segmented by political and ideological means) enables the identification of the cultural and social context of institutionalised educational interventions (this means above all that research carried out in, say, central Africa, is not something exotic – the concept of exotic is in one way or another tied to the nature, level and quality of education in a given

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[4] For definitions see: Berry, Dasen, Sarawathi 1997, Brill and Lehalle 1988, Guerraoui and Troadec 2000, Segall, Dasen, Berry and Poortinga 1999, Troadec 1999.

community – but is as important for pedagogical doctrine and practice in Europe as research focusing on a population in some European catchment area or isolated location, with the difference that it is useful in a different way, for example as a deflector that enables the more correct and more intelligent classification of local themes and issues (see Dasen 2002a and other articles in this collection).

If we now attempt to show the differences between formal, informal and non–formal education or the "acquisition of knowledge" in a slightly more contrasting light, we can first establish that these three forms of education differ from each other at the empirical or descriptive level, which means that it is possible to identify them at least approximately by descriptive characteristics. This differentiation does not of course mean that they are fundamentally different procedures designed for heterogeneous social practices. Thus the expression "formal education" relates to what in everyday speech we usually and spontaneously simply call education: this is the process of formation of usually adolescent (according to the criteria of "our" environment, of course) members of a broad social group which is represented by the state and (sometimes) a religious organisation. The framework within which this process takes place is consequently officially established and recognised, which naturally means that most or – in extreme cases of totalitarian regimes and religious fundamentalism (it is particularly because of this possibility that the efforts of neoliberal and neoconservative authorities to break into the area of informal education are a cause for concern) – all decisions on the content, goals, nature and social position of formal education are taken in this context. It is this part of education that is therefore dealt with by the state mechanism that we call the school system or the education system, in accordance with the laws by which it was established and by which it is regulated. This educational mechanism includes interconnected (i.e. "vertically" and "horizontally" connected) institutions, from nursery schools to higher education institutions, which are also a control network for a segment of intellectual and cultural life and an apparatus with which to promote or privilege a specific part of the cultural or symbolic activity of society. These institutions are not only repressive when they create protected areas for the free and informal acquisition of knowledge in the fields which they "cover", they are also repressive and dysfunctional when they attempt to control and direct the informal acquisition of knowledge and, through it, cultural life as a whole. As I have already mentioned, the official school/educational mechanism of the state by no means covers all education. In fact it only functions well when it can tie itself to the other formative processes taking place in society. Scientific education, for

example, is not productive when it fills learners with knowledge in definitive, canonical form, but when it raises questions which then become spaces for informal education, which may be equated with scientific work in the strict sense of the word: with the production of knowledge. Scientific work in the strict sense of the word cannot be commissioned, directed, given predetermined applied goals, prescribed repertoires and lists of questions which must be answered in order to be "socially useful" to this or that social group with excess power in our society. For scientists and for us, it is not that which can be taken advantage of by such groups that is "socially useful", but that which gives the whole of the social corpus the tools that enable it to live an autonomous life without imposed obstacles and barriers. In short: no scientific discovery (I am not talking about technical inventions, application models, etc. that are classified in some other register) has come about through the accumulation of school–type knowledge and the automatic spilling–over of school–type education into scientific work, i.e. through directed, selective and controlled enculturation; no scientific discovery in any scientific field has been commissioned and included in advance in economic and political exploitation. It is this very autonomy that enables to recognise the scientific discovery and differentiate it from other types of acquisition of knowledge and the manipulation thereof.

The informal acquisition of knowledge, then, does not only involve that form that is popular today in the official classifications of international organisations and states, which limits informal education to the life experiences that befall us and the worldly wisdom we arrive at spontaneously and without reflection: this classification can be considered part of the oft–repeated project to control and capture the bulk of formative processes in society. The first act of this campaign is generally the downgrading and belittling of those unsupervised and therefore "profitless" activities and actions which are generally carried out by well–meaning, good–natured people who are not, however, capable of analysis and reflection. Those who believe that the informal acquisition of knowledge occurs spontaneously and unconsciously – for example in discussions with colleagues in a café (when there isn't blaring music that makes even elementary communication impossible), when we get used to defending our opinion on something, receiving new information from other people and incorporating it into the discussion and our own discourse, and learn how to conduct ourselves in a debate – are party to the planning and implementation of the march of the incompetent into social spaces, which cannot endure this encroachment without damage to every individual member of society. The café scene evoked here may be a real

one but it cannot pretend to be all informal education or at least the fundamental model of such education, nor even its most important part. The continuation of downgrading and limitation is, however, suppression. Unfortunately we are not able to deal with this very urgent issue in detail in the present text.

Formal and informal education are often presented as two poles of social activity in the field of the mental formation of the population of a country or within the sphere of a religion. Between them, it is held, are modalities which combine elements of one pole and the other in different doses. This hypothetical intermediate area is supposed to be non–formal education. Its most frequently cited characteristics are the following: it takes the form of a course, attendance is not compulsory, duration is limited, it is voluntary and in most cases paid for, there are no grades or officially recognised formal titles certifying knowledge acquired. This is, in fact, complementary formal education which the state leaves to private providers in exchange for control over the free time of the population. While this education is not formally enshrined in the envisaged domain of activities of state educational institutions or those that imitate them, a domain which is defined by positive regulations, it is nevertheless controlled and limited by state regulations and instances at various levels. On the other hand this non–formal education has for many years only apparently been voluntary. State institutions borrow its form for so–called supplementary or specification–based education, which is today an important element – in terms not of content but of participation – in maintaining and, to a lesser extent, developing the careers of the lower echelons of the middle cadres. At the same time it has a tendency to include whole categories of the population and subject them to permanent pedagogical control, which suits the state and corporations.

Enculturation and socialisation, which is connected with it, are part of the construction of the individual psyche and thus of the personality as the set of characteristics which make the biological human being even at birth a member of social group, which identifies him as such via various interpellation mechanisms. In every society the newborn baby first becomes a child, which is already a social and historical category, and then an adult, and this is precisely what the processes of enculturation and socialisation or cultural transmission take care of. For the part of these processes that concerns adolescents, in most societies there is a period or, as some researchers of this material call it, a developmental niche (Super and Harkness 1997) in which, through special relations and procedures, the developing individual is incorporated, despite his immaturity and irresponsibility, into a system in which interaction of the following

elements occurs: a) the physical and social contexts in which the individual's development takes place, b) child–rearing practices and c) adults' social representations of growing up (i.e. parental ethnotheories) or of what an individual and child development actually are (Bril Dasen and Sabatier 1999, Dasen 1988).

The concept of a "developmental niche", which sounds quite neoliberal and commercial, does not of course have this meaning in the context of this research: since it is a sociocultural category, it is not possible to tackle the individual without simultaneously tackling the whole of the cultural context of which the individual is part and without which he cannot exist. As some researchers put it, the individual and the culture build one another. This statement is close to what is found by research into human or cultural ecology, which are both culturally and socially anthropological (Bronnferbrenner, 1989; Gardiner, Mutter, Kosmitzki, 1997). We can in fact describe the developmental niche as an open system surrounded by the macro social sphere (Dasen, 2002; Berry 1995; Berry, Poortinga, Segall, Dasen, 1992), meaning that the conception of this niche actually belongs in the eco–cultural sphere.

The proliferation of particular theories with universal pretensions that we encounter when considering informal education as an essential social practice should not puzzle us: these disciplines revolve around issues which have been covered and conceptualised with relative consistency in anthropology but not in social psychology. The proliferation of aspects to which special "modern" theories (of longer or shorter duration) bind themselves is above all a sign of epistemic uncertainty. When this inhibition is taken into account, however, this uncertainty loses much of its charge, particularly if we succeed in identifying the general issue of which aspects are being considered, as though they were scientific objects, and placing (or replacing) these aspects in the context of this issue. In this case they can contribute to the scientific conceptualisation of the field of cultural–social phenomena, which include human development and its representations in individual social environments. In the case of developmental niches, in a large yet limited area of cultural processes and practices we observe the effects of the interaction of processes (acculturation with two Cs, enculturation, cultural transmission) which have been revealed by anthropology and which themselves are also sufficient to explain individual ("psychological") events. In this discursive context, psychology does not in fact play the role of a discipline unto itself, but that of a stopgap in places where concepts – particularly the concept of social representations and the concept of the social imaginary – have not yet been elaborated or are not yet known. In these conceptions,

then, culture is always something external to people, which is not part of their constitution and can therefore be either an instrument of adaptation (in most cases to the ecological and sociopolitical context) or an environment or a set of factors influencing individuals which do not, however, have a rigorous definition and belong among the phenomena of imaginary reality (Loner and Adamopoulos 1997).

The temporal dimension of the objects considered, if we do not understand it as a vector or a teleological series but as a plurality of times established by the dominant processes in the individual segments of the life of a society (one of these times is the period of growing up and personal development), restores to the phenomena under consideration a relational nature which arises through comparison between individual cases, between cultural fractions, between cultures, and at the same time enables comparison as a process of cognition. The philologisation of research approaches is consequently an important segment of social research, since it enables pertinent starting points for more complete and complex understanding. The same applies to conceptions connected with the informal acquisition of knowledge: they lose rigidity and become mutable with regard to the cultural constitution and mentality of social groups. The temporal constitution of the life of society (and the individual) is still far from being fully explored, even though in individual authors we find a sufficiently clear awareness of its existence and of the need to research it.

Schools, approaches

One important reference is without a doubt the work of Jean Piaget, whose main theme is the cognitive development of the individual in connection with culture and the social classifications of the stages of the individual's physical and mental development. Piaget's research has been the basis for much that would not have particularly pleased the author (particularly in the psychology of adolescents), but also for real development of understanding and research instruments, for example in the case of P. Dasen (Dasen and Heron 1981, Dasen 1998), who arrived at a proof and illustration of the universality of cognitive processes in the stage of concrete operations and differences in the rhythms of development of cognitive areas, for example time or quantifications, in connection with their eco–cultural evaluation, that is to say with regard to the role played by individual cognitive areas in comprehension of the world and the physical and social environment and in the formation of mental instruments with which to confront the hypothetical exterior of the

individual in these environments and his place in the respective structures of these environments. Particularly instructive is research into the cognitive area of space in human development in non–European "tribal" cultures (in India, Nepal), which has provided further support for this less utilitarian conception of the acquisition of knowledge. The psychocultural conception of Whiting (1977) in the 1970s, the hypothesis of which involves natural and historical contexts existing independently of the individual and influencing educational and child–rearing practices, which are likewise a separate entity, has only experienced development which has abandoned blind positivism: since then, contexts are not something which affects independently ongoing practices from outside but are integral parts of these practices which have come into being through their research. By no means are they a given reality, independent of practices, which "influences". The permanence of psychological characteristics in adults can actually only be explained by this structured continuity between the individual and the environment (environments are of course different and plural, just as the individuals who comprise them are different and plural), which cultural psychologists, when talking about adults, like to call social "projective–expressive" systems. These, however, are social representations as reconceived by Serge Moscovici more than half a century ago, which belong in the category that cultural anthropologists and sociologists call beliefs and the imaginary (e.g. in connection with the origin of certain diseases). By transforming social psychology from a discipline that was too tied to the education system, with a specific unreflective conception of culture and a specific descriptive conception of personality which ignored the formation and development of knowledge and cognitive tools in the field of the psyche, particularly psychoanalysis, Moscovici effectively transformed it into a branch of cultural anthropology. Be that as it may, the idea which subverted psychological closedness into something descriptive and normative came from social/cultural anthropology in the form of "cross–cultural" categories which required a comparison with other cultural environments and, over time, with historical cultural situations.

The USA in particular has seen the development of a network of institutions which are strongholds of specific disciplines and fields which, as "substitute" sciences whose purpose is to enable the avoidance of actual problems, create partial conceptualisations and temporary solutions to problems, the continued existence of which is, however, ensured by their institutions, which moreover offer them to the world as imperative models supported by a large amount of money and exclusivity. I shall not talk about these institutions here, but it is not hard to compile lists of them on

the basis of their privileged and "export–oriented" statuses in the world of Anglo–American social sciences.[5]

The subject of cultural transmission, which includes issues relating to upbringing and education, has since the very beginning been an anthropological topic,[6] focused on the mechanisms of complex (not only economic) social reproduction and expansion (via models of political organisation, via cognitive models, via cultural patterns, etc.) – in most cases the consequence of the colonial dissemination of the authority of one country, of conquest, of a country's economic and military hegemony, all of which has over time become the subject of anthropological research – which have long since ceased to play the role of legitimising discourses of the authorities, except of course in extremely isolated environments where universal insights do not apply, or where social sciences and humanities are permitted in so far as they are not sciences but modalities of the apologetic discourse of the authorities. Anthropologists from F. Boas to A. Van Gennep, Lévi–Strauss and their structuralist and post–structuralist successors, who came from the sociocultural organisation of large and small, non–industrial and industrial countries, were, with the partial exception of B. Malinowski, among the creators and supporters of cultural relativism, although not all of them considered themselves members of the "culture and personality" school (Clapier Valladon 1976, Ermy 1981, 1977 and 1981).

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[5] I shall merely list a few of them as they appear in the article by Dasen to which I have already referred a number of times in the present article (Dasen 2002). Research associations and publishing networks have developed around individual research focuses, for example the International Association for Cross–Cultural Psychology, the Society for Cross–Cultural Research and the (Francophone) Association pour la Recherche Interculturelle. Within the American Anthropological Association there are two sections that devote part of their attention to the issues of informal and other education. These are the Society for Psychological Anthropology, which publishes the journal *Ethos*, and the Council on Anthropology and Education, which publishes the *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. In every association, however, researchers who deal with human development and informal education are in the minority, although their number is slowly growing, at least in some associations, for example the Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (Dasen and Jahoda 1986, Dasen and Mishra 2010).

[6] Around the beginning of the last century E. Durkheim and M. Mauss addressed the topic without the impulse of psychoanalysis or behaviourism, since the epistemic implications of the former were not yet known outside narrow psychiatric circles, while the latter did not yet exist.

Cultural relativists inferred all cultural and social operations in the social group in question from an environment conceived as a formative apparatus for the formation of the basic personality and its direct derivatives. As an alibi they used a fairly superficial knowledge of psychoanalysis, which became a fashionable "philosophy" at the time of the Parisian artistic avant–gardes, particularly surrealism, and behaviourist psychology, which displayed its para–economistic model (the feedback model that imitates market/commercial manipulation) as the most fundamental theoretical basis of all social and humanistic sciences – rather as in particularly immovable psychological and pedagogical circles Pavlov's stimulus–response "educational" model still applies, at least tacitly, as the basis and starting point for the intervention of the psychologist and pedagogue (training and accustoming). The cultural relativists were opposed by the continuers of traditional conceptions in social sciences and "development psychologists", from G. Stanley Hill to J. Piaget, who attempted to subordinate human development more to its biological side than to its cultural and social side, as result of which they were – seemingly paradoxically – more able than the relativists to acknowledge cultural diversity, provided it was possible to explain it through the biological cycle of human life. The cultural relativists therefore gradually withdrew into the background, while in the Anglo–American world, between 1960 and 1980 (above all at the universities of Yale and Harvard and above all under the influence of John and Beatrice Whiting), the foreground was occupied by trends in research and interpretation which, as a psychocultural orientation, actually retained a kind of soft form of cultural relativism with more developed and initially quite promising observation procedures. Researchers at Yale went furthest in the direction of the institutionalisation and consolidation of the new approach: G. P. Murdock founded the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF), whose collection of ethnographic data was originally on microfilm and is now available on CD–ROM and online. These data are classified into approximately 360 "cultural units" which are supposed to represent as far as possible the full diversity of societies in the world (quoted in Dasen 2002; see Barry 1980, Segall 1989). As regards this collection of data, their number is of course important. Equally important, however, is the fact that they are comparable because they are grouped into categories with regard to phenomena that at least in principle exist in all societies, representing the responses of individual societies to needs that are supposedly present in all human societies. Rapid and pertinent comparisons enable positivistically qualified findings with regard to "cultural prerequisites" and "cross–cultural categories", which before this

were to a large extent either the result of extremely time–consuming but nevertheless not entirely reliable research, or the subject of more or less intelligent speculations.

Dasen (2002) states as an example connected with his – and, in the present text, my – preoccupations the fact that all societies must transmit values from one generation to the next, for which reason it is possible to compare the ways in which they arrange this transmission. In the USA this comparative procedure, which in principle includes all present and past human cultures, is called holocultural or hologeistic.

This procedure or these procedures enable the statistical verification of hypotheses concerning, for example, the relationship between social structure and socialisation practices, which should allow us to arrive at general laws of human behaviour (socialisation practices are not exactly the best example since the discovery that societies with a practically identical social stratigraphy perform quite different socialisation practices as a result of inherited cultural models or because of a current and temporary political regime, with the result that a merely statistical picture is not enough – the path to irrefutable laws of human behaviour and the life of society via statistics and under the aegis of a positivistic understanding of the science of human affairs is still a very long one) (cf. Barry, Child and Bacon 1959). If we say "positivistic" this means that research is based on suppositions which cannot be considered either the only correct ones or the only possible ones. Criticism of these "cross–cultural" categories has quite clearly indicated the limits of the idea, but above all it contradicts a finding of relativist anthropologists which has not been refuted: that every culture – the problem remains above all the fact that we are dealing with too great a fluctuation of criteria supposed to pertinently describe culture as an anthropological subject – is a system that needs to be studied as an autonomous entity and not as a more or less arbitrary collection of cross–cultural characteristics in provisional combinations. The permanency and reproducibility of cultural systems are in fact in themselves a field/object of anthropological research which cannot be abandoned with a flourish of a positivistic magic formula. Nevertheless the hologeistic procedure is a useful auxiliary procedure in anthropological research which can, as I have already noted, facilitate and shorten procedures in the formation of research corpora (with data on, for example, violence, adolescents [Dasen, 1996; 1999; 2000]), although with the caveat that the data have been obtained by ethnologists who for various reasons have not always been able to precisely observe events that are delicate for social groups, not even those during enculturation and socialisation. Institutions have attempted to resolve the matter by sending

researchers (anthropologists and sometimes also psychologists) to various parts of the world in order to observe the same phenomenon using identical methods, which ought to show up differences. And indeed it has, yet it is still not possible to confirm that they are pertinent. Or as Dasen (2002) says: the achievement represented by the extensive "studies of parents and children in six cultures" (Whiting and Whiting 1975, Whiting and Edwards 1988) may in the first place be criticised for the fact that the researchers, since they collected too much information, felt compelled to carry out such a condensing of data that they showed banalities or excessive generalisations. In a similar way, the same group of researchers carried out a comparative study of adolescence and anthropologists wrote a number of good monographs or case studies on the basis of field research, but the comparative study remained in the shadow of these publications and was also actually less important. A kind of by–product of these studies which is anything but insignificant is the shift of so–called everyday cognition into the field of research of several disciplines, which has shown that this field is legitimately part of scientific interest in education in the broad sense, which goes beyond the scholastic understanding of education and is close to informal education, while education itself consists of a set of phenomena connected to cultural transmission, irrespective of where this takes place. Some of the phenomena go beyond transmission and cultural–social reproduction and extend into the field of the production of knowledge, where formal education of the traditional and modern types never reaches.

The status of reality by way of conclusion

The equating of education with schooling is likewise a very restrictive and mistaken position. We human beings spend the majority of our lives outside the education system and involve ourselves in things which barely have a connection with this system. It is outside school – whether during or after formal education – that, with its help or support, we learn the majority of things that we learn in life. We should not of course forget that informal education is a range of activities that is far more heterogeneous and wide–ranging than education in schools, since it extends from scientific insight to familiarisation with the practices of everyday life. In industrialised Western societies, where practically all members of society have spent some time in compulsory education and many have continued their education at non–compulsory but (until the emergence of neoliberal regimes) favoured and subsidised levels, which is supposed to have led to a raising of the level of compulsory education of the entire population,

informal education is somehow outside society's self–image, to such an extent that it is difficult to pose pertinent questions about it and reconstitute it as, despite everything, the prevailing domain of transmission of cultural patterns and the field of intellectual breakthroughs and innovations which the institutions of society then retroactively recover and appropriate, even though the role they play is more that of an obstacle than of places where these processes take place in an intentional and supported manner. As I have already indicated, in today's postmodern world the institutions of the market economy are attempting to insinuate themselves into all processes of social prolongation and reproduction, which causes cultural life to languish or be transformed into an uncontrolled form of social Darwinism. Substitute elites have emerged, and replacement creators who create according to the instructions of the institutions of the market; the same or kindred institutions have ensured the substitution of the historical mechanisms of the social reception of cultural phenomena with the mechanisms of the market, which wreak havoc throughout the informal field of the life of society, degrading it just as they also degrade public education systems which are supposed to encroach on those cultural areas where they have never operated: the conquest of the sphere of the informal, which is the control and the self–interested orientation of cultural and symbolic transmissions, actually the pacification and anaesthetising of that "wild" area which bureaucracies, religious organisations and corporations attempt to bring about in concert with each other, is actually a destructive intervention into that which we call Western civilisation (which of course also concerns all other civilisations). Intercultural comparisons are a tool in the identification of this area of transmissional or cultural practices in the type of societies in which we live; they can of course be a tool with the same purpose in all other types of societies. While this identification is open to abuse, it is not lucrative.

The sphere of informal education is, for anthropologists, in contrast to the vulgar use of the expression, a field of "traditional education". This education which the discourses of banality connect with forms of schooling before the series of utilitarian degradations of the education system which, in the discourses of banality together with the discourse of authority, appear as stages of progress, is in fact an aspect of the processes by which society constitutes itself and which are an obstacle to the anomie and homogenisation on the basis of total subordination desired by the new "elites". Ethnologists and anthropologists have contributed numerous descriptions of these traditional or endogenous forms of education in non–European, particularly African societies. In the majority of the societies

this education has an unobstructed formative role: it turns children into adult members of the community of both sexes, sometimes also producing homosexuals. Many studies have been written on this. I do not intend to list them here but they are not hard to find. Anthropologists have also compared this traditional education with the "classic" Western teaching which was brought to the cultures in question by colonial schools and which has remained there as a special area of social promotion. While traditional education is available to all, everywhere and from all, "classic" Western teaching takes place in a predetermined place and at a specific time and is implemented by specialised staff. It introduces a split into society caused by elitism as the consequence of social promotion according to the Western model. Traditional education is also closely tied to the environment and directly integrated with the needs of society. It does not contain the components of competitiveness because it insists on cooperation and solidarity, on community "spirit", on the immediate application of acquired skills and knowledge, which is in radical opposition to teachings in the colonial school. It is precisely these characteristics that partly explain political violence and the vulnerability of a cohesive and cooperative society to Western forms of authority. Western education emphasises that which is considered intellectual in the countries from which it is imported (even though this is actually the most stubborn form of Western anti–intellectualism), while neglecting physical and moral education – or rather this education is the opposite of that which is produced by "traditional" education and collides with the expectations of "traditional" society, which does not discredit manual and agricultural work, does not cultivate commodity relations, does not intend to change the world, etc. Even the role of parents, age classes and cults in education differs from the Western model of institutionalised education.

This is of course not the only evil brought by the colonial school, although there is no doubt that it was initially a resistance–causing foreign body in the corpus of actions of the subordination of the colonised society; today it is increasingly frequently converted into a tool which can – but only if modified – enable the survival of traditional education and traditional society in their essential parameters. What, though, is the situation regarding informal education in Western societies?

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CHAPTER THREE

PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN NON–FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

TIHOMIR ŽILJAK

Abstract

The article analyses changes in non–formal adult education within the lifelong learning concept with a focus on changes in the relationship between professional accountability and responsibility in adult education. Different approaches to non–formal adult education are analysed, but the key research context is adult learning in the European Union and recent documents regarding the validation of non–formal learning. The article presents various forms of accountability and responsibility within the education governance process. Special emphasis is placed on the participation of state and non–state actors, new policy instruments (validation of non–formal learning and the European Qualification Framework) and types of accountability within this process. Adult educators as key actors in adult education provision are analysed in terms of the development of their professional identity, their role in the educational process and the relationship between professional accountability and personal responsibility.

Key words: adult education, profession, accountability, responsibility, governance

Introduction

The concept of lifelong learning has brought about significant changes in adult education. Changes are occurring under the influence of globalisation, Europeanisation, flexibilisation of work, demographic changes and new technological opportunities.

This article will analyse recent changes regarding professional accountability and responsibility in non–formal adult education within the lifelong learning concept. Analysis will begin with the conceptual and institutional changes affecting the relationship between formal and non–formal learning, as well as the instruments of educational policy that go along with this process (in particular the qualifications framework). After that, various forms of accountability and responsibility in implementation of lifelong learning concept within the governance process in education will be analysed. Finally, the challenges that these changes present for the definition of professional accountability and responsibility will be presented.

Adult learning as part of the lifelong learning concept

With the introduction of the concept of lifelong learning, the position of adult education has changed. Implementation of the lifelong learning concept results in a transformation of objectives, target groups and learning methods in adult education. The first fundamental change is a change to the concept itself – from adult education to adult learning. Within this concept, which emerged after previous concepts of permanent and recurrent education, the focus has shifted from the organised process of teaching to the personal level of a citizen who learns (Schuetze and Casey 2006, 282). The key addition to non–formal and formal education is informal learning (Hager and Halliday 2006, 27), which incorporates more than just self–directed education. The key protagonist is the individual who learns in different circumstances, in distinction from lifelong, permanent or recurrent education (Field 2006, 53, Evans 2003, 6). Basically, the fundamental emphasis has shifted from education to learning. The second major change relates to the importance of adult learning, which not only relates to the longest period of learning in one's lifetime, but is also connected to key responses to the needs for new knowledge and skills that are necessary throughout life and because of which one should continue learning throughout one's life (Field 2006, 49, Evans 2003, 282). This aspect marks a crucial difference with respect to full–time education (in which adults can also participate). The third transformation relates to the balance of personal, economic and social educational objectives that are connected with the new demands of the labour market, democratic processes and other processes that require flexibility of education. Incorporation of the principles of flexibility has become one of the central contributions of the lifelong learning concept and one of its central demands (Field 2006, 100). A flexible approach to

the assessment, validation and recognition of learning results, which then leads to certification and qualification, is being implemented. The availability of education is ensured through measures focused on the individual rather than on providers (individual education accounts, tax measures and loans). It is important to encourage individuals to invest in their own learning, for reasons of both personal fulfilment and employability (cf. Commission of the European Communities 2007, 8).

Simon Warren and Sue Webb (2007) have written an inspiring analysis of lifelong learning discourse and the challenges that researchers will have to face. They identify the discourse of the *responsible learner* as a hegemonic policy narrative, as a form of moral regulation in which certain individuals and groups are required to make themselves amenable to the global economy (Warren and Webb 2007). They state that in this way an economic discourse has been introduced in educational policy. The individual should be responsible for his activities. By investing in his development he is strengthening his human capital. They conclude that the discourse is realised through the regulatory framework, institutional arrangements and curriculum reforms. If individual direction is constructed through state action and social circumstances, this raises the following questions: What would research need to take into account when studying post–compulsory education and training? How to avoid dragging the research into the dominant discourse? The authors have chosen to construct an anti–discourse to the hegemonistic policy narrative – using the concepts of learning career and learning cultures. The focus of the researcher's interest should be, in their view, the relationship between learning and identity and learning as situated social practice. It is also important to investigate the resources (social, cultural and economic) which enable people to develop within their own identities, and how successful they are at doing so (Warren and Web 2007). In their analysis the responsible learner is mostly reduced to the rational consumer, but they bring fruitful findings about changes of discourse.

Non–formal education

With the expansion of the concept of lifelong learning, we no longer talk about adult education, we talk about adult learning, and this learning is a lifelong and life–wide process in which one gains competences through formal and non–formal education, but also through informal learning. The traditional definition, first put forward by Coombs, differentiates formal, non–formal and informal education (Coombs and Ahmed 1974). In this definition non–formal education is

> "any organised, systematic, educational activity carried out outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children" (Coombs and Ahmed 1974, 8).

And this position is still present in EU documents on lifelong learning, education and training (Memorandum 2000, Action Plan on Lifelong Learning). Within this approach the focus is on the formal dimension and certification of education, so that non–formal education is understood as non–certificated education (Rogers 2005, 81), because the formal system validates educational outputs through certification. Although this approach has never been universally accepted (Rogers 2005, 81), it has been widely present within EU education policies.

This classification of education into formal, non–formal and informal should not be taken rigidly, but as a characteristic of various forms of learning (with more formalities or more informalities in the curricula). Formal and informal can be seen as extremes, as ideal types in the continuum of educational opportunities. The differentiation between them points more to the diversity of educational opportunities than to a clear separation of educational forms (Hoppers 2006).

What are the distinctive characteristics of non–formal education that differentiate it from other forms of learning? In his comprehensive study Alan Rogers (2005) explains how it is difficult to find one, unique definition of non–formal education. The problem lies in the different theoretical approaches, different interests and different social and ideological positions of those who are looking for a definition. Other problems include the nature of the phenomenon, the great diversity of non–formal education in different social, political and economic environments, and the different positions that non–formal education has within individual education systems (Rogers 2005,69). For these reasons, this article will focus on analysis of the situation in the European Union.

There are also other descriptions and definitions of non–formal education that are focused on the functional dimensions of educational activities. Brennan (1997), for example, describes the different types of non–formal education as complementary, alternative and supplementary education. But this is only a part of their characteristics, resulting from their relationship with formal education. Most analyses face this problem, because they define the concept of non–formal education only by pointing out how it is different from formal education. In reality, it represents the other aspect, opposite or complementary, of the same concept, rather than an independent phenomenon. The challenge is therefore the following: is it

possible to establish such a concept, if it cannot be understood without its other (or opposite) aspect?

Shlomo Romi and Mirjam Schmida (2009) have applied Kahane's work to an analysis of the components clustered around the four major axes of non–formal education, which combine institutional and cognitive dimensions. They have found that important characteristics are: *structural flexibility,* a *multidimensional* perspective, *trial and error* situations, and new *mechanisms of control* (autonomy, symmetric relationships and peer–group supervision) (Romi and Schmida 2007, 258).

There is a considerable overlap between different forms of learning in the lifelong learning concept, which complicates the analysis of non–formal education as a distinctive form of education. Formal programmes will necessarily contain more and more non–formal characteristics – such as fun, flexibility and openness. Non–formal programmes will be validated, learning outcomes acquired within those programmes will be certified, they will receive increased public appreciation, and they will no longer be seen merely as an idle indulgence in useless hobbies. Pasi Sahlberg (2010) suggests that modern formal schooling should include the following: "learning together, creating new ideas, and learning to live with other people peacefully. Schools will not be able to meet these expectations [. . .]" (48). Accountability, standardisation and comparison of results within educational institutions and between various educational institutions are not the most helpful instruments for the development of a fruitful and flexible educational environment (Sahlberg 2009, 57).

Visible efforts are being made to embed the following advantages of non–formal programmes in the programmes of formal education: focusing on specific, often marginalised groups, introducing the principle of inclusiveness, flexibility regarding methods, organisation and duration of education, and taking into account the environment in which education is taking place. Apart from official certification, there is not much difference between formal and non–formal education. On the other hand, efforts are being made to increase the importance and value of non–formal education through the standardisation of programmes, the introduction of various forms of certification and supervision of the educational process.

Learning is in most cases an intentional activity, regardless of whether it takes place within a formal or non–formal programme, through interaction with friends or as self–directed learning. It can also be spontaneous, unintentional or even unwanted. We can learn by trial and error, but such a form of learning is better avoided. Learning from the public media is acceptable, but it can also be useless and its value can be questionable. Informal learning is increasingly facing the challenges of

aggressive marketing, trivialisation and indoctrination. The individual is left with an increasingly difficult choice between intrusive disseminators of information and entertainment (not always knowledge) on one side, and state–controlled education on the other. The individual's *intention* in the learning process is being tested.

Verification of the learning process

At the end of the process, a certificate bearing an official stamp is the most visible criterion of formality, but it is becoming more and more fragile. Certificates do not necessarily have to be related to formal education. This means that an adult student does not have to come to an educational institution in order to gain new knowledge, skills or competences. He or she can do it on his or her own, or with a little help from someone outside the educational institution or other centres of adult education. An individual can be awarded a certificate after completing a formal educational process, but also on the basis of the validation of non–formal education and informal learning. Considerable efforts by specialised agencies and the Council of the EU's Education Committee to elaborate new elements in the validation of non–formal and informal learning are oriented towards this goal (Colardyn and Bjørnåvold 2004, CEDEFOP 2009).

Identification and validation are based on the recognition of the learning outcomes of an individual and can result in a certificate, diploma or some other form of recognition. Recognition of competences can be formal recognition, whereby official status is given to acquired competences through the awarding of a certificate or credits, i.e. through a process of validation of competences. Recognition can also be in the form of social recognition – through the acknowledgement of the value of competences by economic and social stakeholders (Tissot 2004, 126) Also very important is personal recognition – which means that an individual is aware of his or her competences, regardless of the way he or she has acquired them and regardless of the form in which they are certified (Pires 2007).

Knowledge can be useful even without an official certificate, but certification has its advantages. It enables comparability, predictability and calculability at the national and international level. Certification of knowledge, in accordance with national and European qualifications frameworks, is becoming a link between education and the labour market and a link between national education policies and joint European efforts in education. The diversity of contents and working methods and various

degrees of formality are leading to a new phenomenon: in the current educational environment, adult educators have a problem with their professional identity. In addition to traditional adult education specialists, there are other people who work in adult education, such as fitness instructors, driving instructors, human resources managers, parish leaders, alternative philosophy teachers and museum curators (Field 2006). It would be hard to find values, methods, structural bases, goals and motives that are common to all of them. By shifting the focus from education to learning, their public importance is called into question and is only protected by institutions. It becomes less important how we learn, and more important what kind of competences we have acquired.

Validation of non–formal education

In line with the key European goals (relating to employability), it is evident that certification is very important within the recent European Union approach to non–formal education. The Council of the European Union's Recommendation on the validation of non–formal and informal learning (2012) describes the elements of the process of validation of non–formal and informal learning:

> (a) identification of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non–formal and informal learning; (b) documentation of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non–formal and informal learning; (c) assessment of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non–formal and informal learning; (d) certification of the results of the assessment of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non–formal and informal learning in the form of a qualification, or credits leading to a qualification, or in another form, as appropriate [. . .]. (Council of the European Union 2012)

These principles and the validation arrangements are linked to national qualifications frameworks and are in line with the European Qualifications Framework (Council of the European Union 2012). Frameworks are key tools for the implementation of lifelong learning policies and the equal validation of different learning paths at the national and EU level (Council of the European Union 2004). The identification and validation of non–formal and informal learning serves the needs of the individual learner. These tools support social integration, employability and the development and use of human resources in civic, social and economic contexts. They also meet the specific needs of those individuals who seek integration or re–integration into education and training, the labour market and society. A diversity of stakeholders is also involved. These include providers and

competent authorities in formal education and training, social partners in the workplace and non–governmental organisations in civil society (Council of the European Union 2004).

The guidelines for different arrangements in the validation of non–formal learning drawn up by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP 2009) provide insight into the functions that have to be covered by institutions carrying out the validation process. Validation of learning outcomes is carried out within systems that have to be responsive to individual candidates (CEDEFOP 2009,18). The system is based on the responsibility that is assumed to be held by the key stakeholders. These stakeholders have an interest in the successful operation of validation, and they include:

> "responsible people in public bodies that fund the process" and "responsible people in public bodies that have agreed a policy for validation" (p. 69).

The functions that have to be covered include arranging for assessment and informing and explaining the learning or competence outcomes that are the focus and the responsibilities and accountabilities of the various participants (pp. 47, 48).

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (2006) precisely defines the key objectives of the qualifications framework:

The development and recognition of citizens' knowledge, skills and competence are crucial for the development of individuals, competitiveness, employment and social cohesion in the Community. Such development and recognition should facilitate transnational mobility for workers and learners and contribute to meeting the requirements of supply and demand in the European labour market. Access to and participation in lifelong learning for all, including disadvantaged people, and the use of qualifications should therefore be promoted and improved at national and Community level.

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2008) is a document which is supposed to create a normative basis for the construction of bridges that will connect formal and non–formal education and recognition of learning outcomes acquired outside the educational process. In accordance with the Parliament's decision, Member States had until 2010 to adapt their national qualifications frameworks so that implementation of a European qualifications framework could begin in 2012. By the end of 2012, 36 countries were developing 40 national qualifications frameworks, and 24 national qualifications frameworks had

been formally adopted (CEDEFOP 2013). As in CEDEFOP's analysis of implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), most European comprehensive frameworks should be described as predominantly outcomes–referenced frameworks, which

"link to programmes and delivery modes but use learning outcomes to clarify expectations and increase accountability" (p. 13).

The EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from full–time elementary education to university education, adult education and training and other forms of learning. This approach shifts the focus from a system which emphasises "learning inputs" to learning outputs. One of the key elements in this process is the validation of non–formal and informal learning.

This process fits into the trend of education policies that deal with outcomes and quality assurance, which is part of accountability. In national qualifications frameworks and the EQF, learning outcomes are set in a certain framework, in other words the complexity of learning is ranked so that competences acquired in different ways can be recognised and made *visible*. Recognition of prior learning, which is also related to this process, enables learning and recognition of learning results from outside the educational process. It represents a new opportunity for non–formal education. For this reason, these forms of education strengthen different forms of learning (formal and non–formal).

The European Qualifications Framework is not only a neutral part of curriculum reform, it is also an instrument of education and labour market policy which is designed to satisfy external political and economic goals (transparency, comparability and portability of qualifications in the European Union) (Žiljak 2007). Pia Cort (2010) describes qualifications frameworks as tools for the standardisation of qualifications

"providing the 'consumer'/'learner' with an 'informative label' describing exactly what he/she should be able to do after he/she has acquired a specific qualification."

In her concept, the idea of learners as 'consumers' is described as central to neoliberal thinking, in which education is perceived as a market (p. 306).

Responsibility and accountability within
the governance process

Analysis of the management of the adult education process and its objectives within the context of lifelong learning points to a number of features of the governance approach. The basic structural elements of governance include: collective objectives, coordination, managing capacities and responsibility. Guy Peters described this shift to governance by using the metaphor of steering a boat:

> The root of the word governance, like government, is a word related to steering a boat. A steering metaphor is indeed a good way in which to approach the idea of governance in contemporary societies. Societies require collective choices about a range of issues that cannot be addressed adequately by individual action, and some means must be found to make and to implement those decisions. [. . .] Governance also implies some conception of accountability so that the actors involved in setting goals and then in attempting to reach them, whether through public or private action, must be held accountable for their actions [. . .] to society. (Peters 2012, 20)

Accountability should therefore be an integral part of the governance model.

Shifting the emphasis to governance shows that the focus of interest has moved to the questions of where the main part of educational managements needs to be realised, and who it is that needs to realise it (Dale 1997, 274). Unlike government management, in which the state has exclusive competence in ensuring that education functions as a public good, the key issues are now becoming broader: who is involved in governance, how, and through what activities. Taking into account the findings of the governance model and continuous work on policy throughout the policy process, accountability is understood as an unfinished process process in which objectives, actors and fields and modes of activity are subject to substantial changes.

Accountability is a concept that has been accepted as an important and inseparable part of governance, and with the introduction of the concept of new public management it has become inevitable. It relates to the virtues of actors who are reliable, responsible and fulfil their duties, but also to social mechanisms through which actors inform other actors about their activities, funds they have spent, authority they have exercised, and for that bear certain consequences. It is vital that actors who are accountable explain and justify their activities to those to whom they are accountable. Actors have to have a formal or non–formal obligation to deliver such

information. This includes providing complete information and data, on the basis of which a judgement is made on the extent to which such activities are in accordance with that what is planned or expected, and with the procedures or powers available to the actors. Within such a process, responses are submitted to those who make judgements, and on the basis of those judgements they regulate their relationship with those who are accountable. Within the governance approach, actors can be private, public or somewhere between the private and the public. Accordingly, they are accountable not only to state bodies, but also to members of the professional community, the buyers and users of services, stakeholders who have invested their money in certain activities, managers responsible for certain processes, citizens who have given their trust to those responsible for formulating public policy. Because of this, the process can be more or less formalised and based on legality, legitimacy, professional expertise, efficiency or profitability.

Actors with the power to demand answers, information and explanations can, following a judgement, impose sanctions, which are a disciplinary measure for the accountable party. This can be an administrative procedure, a legal sanction, the cancelling of a cooperation, public condemnation or a form of professional sanction. Accountability overlaps with responsibility, but in public policies efforts are made to distinguish these two terms. They both relate to the provision of answers with regard to activities performed, authority exercised, impacts achieved. With accountability, the emphasis is on external supervision, demands for answers and explanations and sanctions. Responsibility in this context puts more emphasis on morality, sense of duty and guilt, and professional ethics.

Control and accountability should contribute to efficiency, but also to justice. For this reason Adler (2003) has developed a typology of administrative justice, which includes various modes of accountability for activities performed.

This review of models is important because as well as the traditional hierarchical or professional models of justice it emphasises the importance of service users or consumers. This means that in the treatment of patients, or the education of learners, we should not only be accountable to our superiors, professional organisations and legal regulations, but also to patients or learners. On the other hand, the ever–increasing presence of the market in education shows that the managerial and market models are becoming more and more important. The typology used by Hill, adapted from Mashaw, shows that these models do not have to be in conflict, since a correct attitude towards users is already incorporated in the professional approach as an important criterion and the primary objective of the

profession (Hill 2005,253). Hill analyses the relationship between legal procedure and the demands of service users in the implementation process (p. 253). It is important that there should be a balance between rules and discretion, in the sense that direct providers (for example organisers or providers of education) should have the right to adapt the rules to a concrete situation, while users should be able to influence the implementation process by having their voices heard.

Table 3–1 Six normative models of administrative justice

Model	Mode of decision making	Legitimating goal	Mode of accountability	Characteristic remedy
Bureaucratic	Applying rules	Accuracy	Hierarchical	Administrative review
Professional	Applying knowledge	Expertise	Interpersonal	Second opinion of complaint to a professional body
Legal	Asserting rights	Legality	Independent	Appeal to a court or tribunal (public law)
Managerial	Managerial autonomy	Efficiency gains	Performance indicators	Publicity
Consumerist	Consumer participation	Consumer satisfaction	Consumer charters	"Voice" and/or compensation through consumer charters
Market	Matching supply and demand	Profit making	To owners or shareholders	"Exit" and/or court action (private law

Source: M. Adler 2003, 333.

These findings are important for this article. The issue of balance between forms of accountability in the bureaucratic, professional and consumerist models of justice is also important. Should adult educators be accountable for their activities to state officials, the professional community or their users (learners)? What difficulties lie in establishing balance between these types of accountability? Alongside the modes of external accountability within the present context of governance, a model of managerial accountability is also present – because efficiency is a

crucial element of accountability. The market model (creation of profit) is not acceptable to the public, because education is seen as a public service where profit should not be a priority criterion. The legal model is understood as one that provides the necessary legal framework in modern democratic countries, but it is not necessarily decisive for the encouragement or development of new forms of adult education activities.

Fani Lauermann and Stuart A. Karabenick (2011) propose that a multidimensional approach is required to capture the complexity of teacher responsibility and describe the extensive connections between teacher responsibility and existing psychological frameworks.

Table 3–2 Components of responsibility and their specifications in the literature

Component	Specifications in the literature
Who is responsible? ("subject" of responsibility)	Personal responsibility • _Sense of internal obligation • _Reference to a moral or legal standard (e.g. good/bad, right/wrong) • _Critical self–judgment • _Concern for others (e.g. own children, students) • _Concern for consequences of own actions • _Initiative and self–determination, deliberate decision making • _Internal locus of control Collective responsibility (e.g. among teachers) and diffusion of responsibility
For what?	• Responsibility for own actions, consequences of these actions, actions of others for whom one is vicariously responsible, tasks, etc. • Feeling responsible for something versus being held responsible for something • Responsible for a problem versus for finding a solution • Responsible for positive versus negative outcomes

Source: Lauermann and Karabenick 2011,124.

The authors comprehensively review the various dimensions and levels of responsibility and correlate them with accountability.

Trust and the factors that cultivate it are likely to instill responsibility because they may reduce the sense of vulnerability associated with taking responsibility and being accountable. . . . [T]eacher responsibility is

embedded in contextual factors such as job autonomy, position in the organizational hierarchy, availability and distribution of resources and information, role ambiguity, conflict, and overload, as well as person factors such as perceived organizational support, proactive personality type, internal locus of control, self–efficacy, trust, and work ethic. (135–137)

Responsibility and accountability can be at odds; that is, accountability can make introduction of responsibility difficult. This is particularly true in situations where accountability standards are rigid and hierarchically ordered and do not respect professional autonomy or the local environment. This can be reflected in an accountability–responsibility gap. The criteria according to which teachers are judged accountable should be consistent with the criteria that determine their sense of professional responsibility. Otherwise accountability will be in conflict with accountability and will generate resistance. (p. 137)

Gert Biesta (2004) calls this approach a culture of accountability and argues that it is apolitical and antidemocratic because it perceives students and other participants as consumers and reduces citizens' democratic opportunity to intervene in education issues.

"The core problem is that while many would want the culture of accountability to emphasize accountability to the public, it actually creates a system focused on accountability to regulators and the like, thereby removing the real stakeholders from the 'accountability loop'. In this respect, the current technical–managerial approach to accountability actually *produces* economic relationships between people and makes democratic relationships difficult if not impossible to establish." (p. 240)

And Biesta argues that the accountability context is one of the biggest threats for quality of education. According to Biesta, the accountability relationship becomes a *formal* relationship in which quality becomes meaningless, becomes associated with processes and procedures rather than with content and aims (p. 248). In his view, there is no way this technical–managerial concept of accountability could be reconciled with an approach in which responsibility is in the central position (p. 250). Because this moral dimension of responsibility is replaced by the selfish individual interests of a consumer, the result will be a lack of moral capacity and loss of other dimensions of responsibility – the dimensions of responsibility of human beings (responsibility for other and otherness in society) (p. 246). This position makes constituting the responsibility of citizens when they are acting as consumers difficult, and it treats new elements of governance as non–political and non–democratic. A tendency

to depoliticise education is unarguably present (Žiljak 2009), and critiques of the implementation of the model of governance are legitimate. Yet while there is no disputing the existence of a tendency to replace the traditional idea of responsibility with the relationship between consumer and service provider, such objections nevertheless overlook the significance of new forms of management, participation and relations within education systems at the national and international level. These changes can be evaluated differently, but they cannot be neglected.

Stephen Ball (2012) argues that there is a new form of responsibility for education professionals, where performance is a key criterion for the assessment of education in a new, entrepreneurial environment.

> "The arts and skills of enterprise are a generic form of new responsibility which responds to the strictures of performance. They are particular forms of moral agency and disposition for social action which rest upon a taking of 'responsibility'. [. . .] There is a dual and linked set of responsibilities embedded here; one for performance (standards, outcomes, ranking, improvement) done by working on and with students [. . .]; and the other for efficiency – cost–reduction [. . .], innovation [. . .] and entrepreneurship." (p. 35)

It may be concluded that within the conditions in which governance is implemented, including various actors and the various levels at which decisions are made on education and training, there are number of levels of accountability. For non–formal education the market is crucial, and learners are consumers. Providers have accountability to learners and responsibility regarding efficiency, which is the way incomes and costs are created. But in education there are also experts who develop professional criteria and professional accountability. In the end, by recognising the outcomes of non–formal education and connecting them to qualifications frameworks, non–formal education is assuming a position of hierarchical accountability to the bodies which carry out certification of knowledge. It may therefore be concluded that these accountabilities overlap. These forms have not completely squeezed out the responsibility of the individual, which always contains various forms of ethics (Biesta 2004). They have, however, have changed its significance, from responsibility for the development of an individual as a human being, personal development and development of the community, to the development of an individual as a consumer of educational services, who will be trained to education to deliver high–quality products.

Professionalisation in adult education

"Profession" and "professional" are terms that are understood in various ways in everyday use and specialist terminology. Colloquially, "professional" is used as a synonym for expert, while a "profession" is used to mean a vocation or occupation and can signify work that is better paid than amateur work (Šporer 1990, 15). Doctors, nurses, lawyers, and so on are traditionally defined as professionals. Even in theoretical definitions, however, there are no eternally fixed characteristics: the context within which professionalisation is determined has been changing (Scanlon 2011, 2) and the basis of professions has been changing in circumstances in which professions are no longer only defined within national frameworks, but where global and multicultural influences on various understandings of professions are also present (Scanlon 2011, 4). Regardless of the differences and changes that are occurring, some characteristics of professions are almost universally accepted: a theoretical foundation, a monopoly on professional expertise, public recognisability, organisation of the profession, etc. (Šporer 1990, 16).

The question of professionalisation in adult education is not a new one. Peter Jarvis argued in 1985 that adult education was a "semi–profession", that is an occupation that has the following characteristics: no firm theoretical base; no monopoly of exclusive skills; the existence of rules to guide practice; less specialisation than occupations generally regarded as professions; control exercised by non–professionals (Jarvis 2004, 294). He suggests that there are at least eighteen different roles in the work of adult educators – from teachers and assessors to trainers and authors of learning materials (Jarvis 2004, 295). According to Jarvis, even the question of professionalisation may have become redundant, because adult education is implemented in a society in which the central issues of public policies relate to effectiveness and efficiency, and autonomy is of secondary importance. Is it even important, he asks, for adult education to be regarded as a profession? (Jarvis 2004, 294).

In their famous work on professionalisation in adult education, Sharan Merriam and Ralph Brockett (2007) list three elements of professionalisation in adult education: *comprehensive professional organisation*, which would need to encompass divergent elements of adult education, *literary and information resources* for the development of adult education – books, publications and all other forms of spreading of knowledge, critical thinking, stimulation of new knowledge, and *graduate adult education courses*, where the relationships between knowledge and skills and types of knowledge that are nurtured or developed here are equally important

(226–234). These three elements are important for connecting experts into a professional community, for their exchange of experience, mutual support and mutual learning (Merriam and Brockett 2007, 237).

The emphasis is on the professional community as a knowledge community (Frost 2001, 6), where the professional community is constantly asking questions with regard to the realisation of certain public activities, but is also controlling how these activities are carried out. If they are not realised the way they should be, the professional community can prescribe sanctions (for example sanctions against doctors prescribed by a medical association). Public recognisability is an element which is required in order to give legitimacy to the activities of adult educators; it needs to make it acceptable for them to have a monopoly on discussions about adult education, for specialised university andragogical studies to be publicly supported, for specialised journals to be published, etc.

DiMaggio and Powell have very convincingly pointed out the dimension of power and influence; they explain professionalisation as the collective struggle of the members of a given occupation to define their activities so that the production process can be controlled by the producers themselves (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 152). They emphasise the importance of filtering personnel (p. 152), which is a problem to which Scanlon (2011) has dedicated an entire book, namely the problem of how to become a professional. The question of entering a profession is significant because it defines how one becomes a member of this community and what distinguishes a professional from other practitioners in the same field of activity. As the elements of a profession are related to theoretical knowledge and its practical application, entering it usually requires a university qualification and successful practical work, i.e. the practical application of theoretical knowledge, where the role of the professional community which defines the criteria for entering the community is crucial. Constant changes in the field of professional activity also affect the criteria for entering the profession, which have to be confirmed over and over again. Within the lifelong learning process, adult educators are also learning throughout their whole lives and are in the same position as other professions and semi–professions which constantly have to prove themselves. Scanlon concludes that in contemporary professions there are fewer and fewer eternal masters and more and more lifelong apprentices (Scanlon 2011, 29).

By expanding the field and methods of their activities, adult educators are at the same time putting the distinctive characteristics of their own field – its own specific professional quality – at risk. The broadening of their range of activities to include a wide variety of organisations (from

schools, museums and libraries to sports clubs, religious groups and various forms of non–formal gatherings, particularly at universities) leads to the question: is this a profession, a semi–profession, or merely an unstructured group of disparate activities (Jarvis 2004)? If learning in different circumstances and different ways is of central importance – and not harmonised teaching strategies and procedures – is it possible to find something within all these activities which fundamentally connects a (sports) coach, a librarian and a university professor? The second dimension is temporal duration: learning *from cradle to grave*. The expected flexibility, which has still not been fully incorporated into everyday practice, would mean that teaching, like the assessment of learning outcomes, is constantly adapted so as to take into account students' prior knowledge and skills, as well as the current needs of the labour market.

Adult education and the professional accountability of adult educators

We constantly have to take into account the differences that exist within the concept of adult learning, which covers general education, vocational training, other forms of formal and non–formal education, education for different age groups. Within formal education the focus has shifted to learning outcomes, and this shift corresponds to the development of mechanisms of hierarchical accountability within the bureaucratic model (in Adler's typology of models of administrative justice). In this way, each individual is given a chance to prove his or her competence in a defined administrative procedure mostly governed by state agencies. The role of the professional is reserved for defining occupational standards, as well as competences and elements of the qualifications frameworks. Professional accountability is not primarily organisational, but consists more of the protection and promotion of professional virtues (Bovens 2010).

The key regulatory role is taken over by state agencies. Their jurisdiction implicitly includes administrative bodies which are formally and organisationally separated from ministries or the government, departments that continuously take care of public business at the national level. Within these agencies, those who are employed as public servants are mainly financially supported by the government budget, and as such are required to follow legal procedures. Agencies enjoy a certain autonomy in relation to ministries (Egeberg and Trondal 2009, 674; according to Christensens and Lægreid 2007, 501),

> "[c]reating separate, specialized agencies can contribute to a clearer demarcation of responsibilities and roles and greater efficiency and predictability, but it may also result in increased complexity, problems of co–ordination, higher transaction costs and reduced potential for effective political control and accountability."

The official raison d'être for autonomous agencies (from the OECD, for example) is that structural separation, more managerial autonomy and managerial accountability for results will improve performance, but this has not been proved as a general finding (Christensens and Lægreid 2007, 504).

Within non–formal education, although the profession is in most cases important, market criteria and students' satisfaction prevail. A combination of market–based and profession–based evaluation criteria is characteristic of responsibility in non–formal education. The problem lies in identifying the common characteristics of non–formal programmes. Partial interests and identities (language teachers, visual arts teachers, sports coaches) prevail in this field, and it is therefore difficult to define a common interest that could enable the professional community to define the criteria for entering the profession, common organisational structures and criteria for professional control (the creation of a monopoly).

Finally, there is a field in which all of these characteristics are more prominent. If informal learning is not education, what do adult educators do in this field and how could their roles be defined?

In all of these forms, a legal model of justice with independent accountability procedures is also important. This is Adler's legal model of justice, which can help in the prevention of discrimination and the realisation of rights to education, at the same time facilitating the inclusion of students, but the whole process is dependent on administrative capacities. Administrative capacities for the certification of new programmes are more important than the legal framework (although an optimistic belief in the power of norms, i.e. the idea that everything will be settled by new regulations, is still present). In this sense, the importance of the bureaucratic model has been growing steadily, particularly in circumstances where the influence of agencies at the national and European levels has been increasing significantly.

Conclusion

Changes in non–formal adult education within the concept of lifelong learning result in changes to the relationship between professional accountability and responsibility in this form of education. Within the

lifelong learning concept, formal and non–formal education are part of a single concept with overlapping objectives, values, approaches and methods of validation. The introduction of qualifications frameworks and the validation of non–formal learning are important forms of institutional change which bring formal and non–formal education closer together within European education policies. These changes are occurring within conditions of changes from government to governance. This means that the participating actors are changing, along with the levels and processes of decision–making. Accountability is an integral part of this concept, as an instrument of quality assurance which clearly defines the relationship between those who implement programmes and those to whom they are accountable. In such circumstances the concept of accountability is gaining new dimensions. In conditions in which there is no longer a single, dominant actor to which to be accountable (i.e. the state), when the results of non–formal education are certified and learners are becoming consumers who choose services, accountability itself is an ambiguous and multidimensional concept. Professional accountability is only one of its manifestations. The provider tends to construct his or her own professional identity, which includes accountability to the professional community. At the same time, the provider has a responsibility which contains a clear moral dimension. This analysis has mostly dealt with the responsibility of professionals, which contains concern for others, concern for the consequences of their own actions, deliberate decision–making and an internal locus of control. Besides the multiple dimensions of accountability and the various forms in which education is implemented, this creates various challenges. This means that responsibility is constituted within a governance system under conditions of a market for educational services wherein practitioners are accountable to learners as consumers, to the managers who control education spending, and to the state which controls outcomes. The state is no longer the only actor dealing with formal education – while having no influence on the results of non–formal education. Now the process is taking place through a complex interplay of state and non–state actors within the system of governance. Within this process the professional community of adult educators is advocating professionalisation in all forms of adult learning, although the profession of adult educator is still being constituted. The adult educator is only one of the actors to carry a burden of responsibility at the level of implementation, while being far less present at the level of accountability and unable to influence the crucial (bureaucratic, managerial, consumerist) accountability processes. Adult educators nevertheless retain an important element of personal responsibility that is

not necessarily harmonised with the accountability process in terms of values, procedures or contents. This gap between accountability and responsibility remains a possible starting point for further research within adult education.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL AND ANTI–INTELLECTUALISM IN RELATION TO FORMALLY AND NON–FORMALLY ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

TAJA KRAMBERGER

Abstract

Anti–intellectualism, strongly reinforced in the pragmatic framework of the neoliberal paradigm (as one of its integral, structurally essential aspects), is by no means a new phenomenon. We have known for a long time that with its more or less subtle or deeply naturalised practices it extends into all areas of life and, through the imperative of prescribed knowledge and persistence in the spontaneity of the *unthought*, marks them decisively. Despite everything, however, its constitution, its structural properties and its generic characteristics remain relatively poorly illuminated zones of this complex social phenomenon. In the social context of Slovenia there are still no notable or penetrating studies that have examined anti–intellectualism with the help of analyses of concrete material and illustrated its functioning in a specific provincial Central European socio–historical context. In cases where educational practices are profoundly, systemically and unreflectively imbued with anti–intellectualism, non–formal/informal methods of acquiring knowledge would, in this respect, appear to offer a better starting point for coherent knowledge and creativity. The article first presents the circumstances of the birth of the modern "intellectual" in France, in relation to anti–intellectual social and discursive strategies. It then offers a brief overview of understanding of the intellectual and intellectual/anti–intellectual strategies in various European environments and contexts. The article ends with a brief account of the destructive dimensions of the long–lasting

heritage of anti–intellectualism and lack of reflection – destructive for intellectually pertinent critical thought and the creative spirit – in the provincial Central European sphere, to which Slovenia also belongs.

Keywords: intellectual, anti–intellectualism, education, formal, non–formal and informal knowledge

Introduction

"The strain of anti–intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that 'my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge'." Isaac Asimov. A Cult of Ignorance, *Newsweek*, January 21 1980, 19.

The quotation from Isaac Asimov (1920–1992) chosen to introduce the present article comes from the broader framework of post–Enlightenment rationalist thought, relating to the cognitive acquisition of knowledge and the civic dimensions of education. In the last decade debates about the methods and effects of education in the broader context of society have once again begun to occupy a more prominent place in academic and specialist debates, probably in part as a result of the rapid neoliberal deregulation of education systems, which is rapidly abandoning the pedagogical, cognitive and critical–epistemological gains of the past century and rushing headlong into *blissful ignorance*. This process was long ago effectively ridiculed by Asimov's predecessor Voltaire, in his philosophical tale about the adventures of Candide and Pangloss.

The story of Candide actually contains many moments that are extremely interesting from the point of view of acquired knowledge. One such moment could be said to refer directly to *non–formally and informally acquired knowledge*,[1] which by no means derives from simple blissful ignorance but consists of cognitions verified over the course of an individual life and enriched by experience. This is the part of the story

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[1] For more detailed information on non–formal education and the relevant bibliography, see Dasen 2000, Finger and Asun 2001, Muršak et al. 2006 and Kelava 2012, for the neoliberal intervention in public education and the history of the effects of neoliberalism in all social fields, see Laval 2005, Rotar 2007a, Bourdieu and Wacquant 2006, Kelava and Čadež 2009 (for the Slovene context); for social justice and the importance of the secular school for democracy see Kodelja 2005 and 2006; on the secularisation of society in the nineteenth century see Chadwick 1995; on the crisis of democracy, messianic religious fundamentalism and anti–intellectualism in the Bush government see Giroux 2005, cf. Eagleton 2003.

(Chapter 25) in which Candide and Martin pay a visit to a fabulously wealthy Venetian nobleman, Pococurante, who lives in the midst of magnificent and tastefully laid out gardens and possesses an extensive library. Pococurante has a very dry attitude towards even the great works of the human spirit and is unimpressed by them, although it is true that occasionally he does acknowledge, without flattery, the merits of the very greatest of them. In this relationship to the *singularly digested* cultural capital of the past there is, provided the reader is not too conceited and does not take the nobleman's declarations – which are imbued with wit – as being generally disdainful, much that is liberating and emancipating. While Candide is utterly bewildered and astonished by Pococurante's answers, since he himself is the product of formal, passive–submissive education and for him the zone of original thought is, as it were, outside his perception, his companion Martin finds the nobleman's independent yet somewhat severe spirit contagious. Pococurante, whom we may consider an imaginary representative of *critically reflexive* Enlightenment thought (in contrast to *mnemonic–scholastic* thought, which immediately reconciles itself unquestioningly with whatever is prescribed),[2] replies in the following way when Candide asks him what he thinks of Virgil, Horace and Cicero:

> "Why, I grant," replied Pococurante, "that the second, third, fourth, and sixth books of his Aeneid, are excellent; but as for his pious Aeneas, his strong Cloanthus, his friendly Achates, his boy Ascanius, his silly king Latinus, his ill–bred Amata, his insipid Lavinia, and some other characters much in the same strain, I think there cannot in nature be anything more flat and disagreeable. I must confess I prefer Tasso far beyond him; nay, even that sleepy taleteller Ariosto."
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> "May I take the liberty to ask if you do not experience great pleasure from reading Horace said Candide.
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> "There are maxims in this writer," replied Pococurante, "whence a man of the world may reap some benefit; and the short measure of the verse makes them more easily to be retained in the memory. But I see nothing extraordinary in his journey to Brundisium, and his account of his bad dinner; nor in his dirty, low quarrel between one Pupilus, whose words, as he expresses it, were full of poisonous filth; and another, whose language was dipped in vinegar. His indelicate verses against old women and witches have frequently given me great offence: nor can I discover the great merit of his telling his friend Maecenas, that if he will but rank him in the class of lyric poets, his lofty head shall touch the stars. Ignorant readers are apt to judge a writer by his reputation. For my part, I read only to please myself. I like nothing but what makes for my purpose."

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[2] For more on this see the research report by Kramberger 2009a.

Candide, who had been brought up with a notion of never making use of his own judgment, was astonished at what he heard; but Martin found there was a good deal of reason in the senator's remarks.

"Oh! here is a Tully," said Candide; "this great man I fancy you are never tired of reading?" "Indeed I never read him at all," replied Pococurante. "What is it to me whether he pleads for Rabirius or Cluentius? I try causes enough myself. I had once some liking for his philosophical works; but when I found he doubted everything, I thought I knew as much as himself, and had no need of a guide to learn ignorance."[3]

The extract is not simple, in the same way that Pococurante is no simple nobleman, and even less an arrogant *ignoramus*. The opposite is true: it is clear from his answers that he has read and examined practically everything that is considered to have any value in the "cosmopolitan environment" and has left nothing aside or unread, not even those works he did not care for (he is able to call to mind at any time their apparently "marginal" and "ephemeral" details). In as much as it is possible to clearly perceive rationalisation and agility of thought in his answers, his positions (for we may say that Pococurante has *positions* and does not deal with common or private *opinions*), acquire an intellectual validity that is by no means the same as consumable, circulating and ubiquitous opinion (and thus the *unthought* in the work).[4] As such, his positions do not correspond to the commonplace value system either. Pococurante is an erudite, original and independent thinker. He is a kind of noble autodidact – with his own clear position of utterance regularly tested in practice (including, as we learn from the above extract, judicial practice). Consequently – and this is implicit in Voltaire's narrative – he has formed his positions in a non–formal (or more precisely an informal) and singular way through his own experiences and reflections, where the initial formal knowledge and reflections of others merely served to advise him and were not decisive

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[3] The quoted passage is from the English translation of Voltaire's *Candide* available online at: http://www.literature.org/authors/voltaire/candide/chapter–25.html.

[4] I use the concept of the *unthought* (*impensé*) in the sense used by Pierre Bourdieu – as that which is pre–reflexive, taken for granted, which has not yet been given to thought i.e. has not yet been mentally elaborated; that which is close to *doxa* (meaning *opinion*), which is overlooked, spontaneously passed over. In a certain sense it involves the unconscious, doxic elements of segments of knowing; reified, unreflective, circulating rumours and meanings. For Bourdieu, doxa is an integral part of *illusion* (*illusio*) as a belief–based and unproblematised expression of belonging to the hypotheses of a specific disciplinary field. See for example Bourdieu 1997.

models for his views, valuations and conclusions. The contrary is also true: Pococurante's life experiences, so it seems, although he moves along the narrow boundary between paradigms, are not magical tools able to "speak by themselves" without an intellectual reference, or reveal "an accurate notion of the world" (McLaren 1995, 253).

Pococurante's *habitus*, if we ignore the ironic undertone of his name[5] (which in any case his statements partly undermine), is a good initial illustration of my purpose in this article: to reveal some of the mechanisms of the functioning of anti–intellectualism in relation to non–formally and, in particular, informally acquired knowledge.[6] In order to do this I shall

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[5] Undoubtedly his good situation (*sine cura*, as indicated by his name in the style *nomen est omen*) is also significant. A secure basis of existence is one of the decisive preconditions for autonomy and sovereignty in the public application of non–formally and informally acquired knowledge.

[6] UNESCO's definition of non–formal and informal education concerns those educational practices that derive from the out–of–school (*extra–scolaire*), i.e. non–institutional, and outside–the–family (*périfamiliale*) environment, although these practices should nevertheless have a corrective and compensatory function achieved through a synergy of scholastic and family knowledge with this other knowledge from the out–of–school and outside–the–family environment (see Pain 2000, 258–259). Otherwise, UNESCO's typology of (adult) education is as follows: 1. *formal education* (French: *éducation formelle*; Italian: *educazione formale*; German: *formelle Bildung*; Spanish: *educación formal*, Slovene: *formalno izobraževanje*) is an institutionally organised, regulated and systematised form of acquisition of knowledge which is usually led by professionals on the basis of particular pre–developed curricula and which leads to official qualifications, accreditations and certificates (diplomas, school certificates, etc.); 2. *non–formal education* (French: *éducation non formelle*; Italian: *educazione non–formale*; German: *non–formelle Bildung*; Spanish: *educación no formal*; Slovene: *neformalno izobraževanje*) breaks with "traditionalist" educational methods or at least distances itself from rigid models of "traditional" scholastic knowledge, although it continues – sometimes within the curriculum and sometimes outside it – with the elaboration and transfer of knowledge. (The expression "traditional" relates to educational practices with their basis in the nineteenth century; it does not therefore have the same meaning here as in social anthropology, where, in the context of "traditional" societies, the educational function is not concentrated in a single mechanism.) Such education does not lead to broad official recognition but builds on and enriches the individual's talents, skills and expertise. The practices of non–formal and informal education are in most cases more engaged than in the case of formal education because they are decisively connected with individual and groups interests and are not under the pressure of institutional obligation; 3. *informal education* (French: éducation informelle; Italian: *educazione informale*; German: *informelle Bildung*; Spanish: *educación informal*, Slovene: *informalno izobraževanje*) follows entirely non–institutional paths and is closer to self–

begin with the birth of the modern critical intellectual in the French environment and, in relation to this, the formation of the anti–intellectual, or rather, anti–intellectual responses to the appearance of the intellectual in the social arena. In passing, I shall also enumerate some of the key authors and stages from the history of anti–intellectualism. I shall be supported in my endeavour by post–Enlightenment critical thought in its various manifestations, which have left a visible trace in various social science disciplines, notably in the trajectory of *critical* (and) *revolutionary pedagogy* (McLaren 1986, 1995, 2003a and 2005, Giroux 1988 and 2005, Kincheloe 2004).[7] The *fil rouge* of this exercise is the hypothesis that informal methods of proficiency production – in permanent correspondence with intellectually pertinent bodies of knowledge – are the most potent, although by no means also self–sufficient, pure, untainted or unmediated. In order to understand the achievement and extension of (revolutionary) critical pedagogy and remove anti–intellectual epistemic obstacles, it is however crucial to shake off consistently the perspective in which formal "classroom instruction and learning" is seized upon as a "neutral process antiseptically removed from the concepts of power, politics, history, and context" (McLaren 2003a, 186 and 2003b).

Crystallisation of the concept of the intellectual and the anti–intellectual in recent European history

The Dreyfus affair (1894–1906) may be considered one of the decisive and formative events that defined the notion of the (critical) intellectual in

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discovery/autodidacticism, to learning without a teacher or instruction; it is closer to struggles to maintain balance with the help of procedures relating to identity and civic attitudes, etc. It includes life situations, actions, practices, experiences, successes, defeats and other unofficial educational strategies (readings, viewing works of art, debates, controversies, conflicts, etc.) which are often entirely unplanned and which structure and socialise people (in the sense of connecting them) and impel them to reflection, with the result that they feel that they are alive and participating in living events in the present. See Pain 2000, 258–259, cf. Loewen 2011, Muršak et al. 2006, Kelava, 2012. For a pioneering reference study of the non–formal aspects of education, see the UNESCO report by E. Faure entitled *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow.* Paris: UNESCO, 1972. This report states among other things that 70% of human knowledge is acquired non–formally or informally – i.e. extra–institutionally, although this only applies to societies of the Western type in the twentieth century.
[7] British educator Paula Allman, writes Peter McLaren (2003b), used the term "revolutionary critical pedagogy", which McLaren has further elaborated in his recent works as "critical revolutionary pedagogy" (McLaren 2005)

modern European history.[8] In January 1898 the writer Émile Zola (1840–1902), then at the height of his fame, publicly took the side of Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), an artillery officer of Jewish descent wrongly accused of high treason. The involvement of this prominent figure in this hitherto little–known scandal limited to a small circle of people, as represented by the publication of Zola's open letter "J'accuse …!"[9] in Clemenceau's newspaper *L'Aurore*, transformed the progress of the scandal and marked a key moment in European history in several registers (today more or less forgotten).[10]

The decisive stand taken by Zola, a public figure with a considerable following and the power to mobilise opinion, on the side of the *Dreyfusards*,[11] i.e. the defenders of Dreyfus's innocence, Republican values and a secular state based on the rule of law, alarmed the *anti–Dreyfusard* right wing, the defenders of autocratic government, religion and military hegemony on the basis of tribal and racist hypotheses – who for the most part saw Dreyfus, throughout the affair, as the *juif coupable*, automatically guilty (by nature) simply by virtue of being a Jew (anti–Semitism). Their initial reaction was that of a compact conservative force facing a "dangerous" new movement: they founded a series of right–wing newspapers and news–sheets and their appearances in print were characterised by the use of ridicule, disdain, denunciation and reinforced anti–Semitic elements (anti–Semitic caricatures, posters, pamphlets, polemics, petitions, etc.). When the persistent Dreyfusard mobilisation began to bear its first fruits, the anti–Dreyfusards felt compelled to adopt the procedures first employed by the Dreyfusards and then use them, *mutatis mutandis*, against their opponents.[12]

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[8] On this occasion I will leave intellectuals and the concept of the intellectual *ante litteram* (before the nineteenth century) to one side. On this subject see Le Goff 1998, Charle 1990, Winock 1997, Kramberger 2009a.

[9] A Slovene translation of this text by Drago Rotar with notes and comments by Taja Kramberger appeared in *Monitor ZSA*, 2004, VI/1–2, 4–20. For the English translation see http://www.marxists.org/archive/zola/1898/jaccuse.htm.

[10] Zola's entry into the affair has extremely far–reaching consequences; radical restructurings take place in a range of social fields (literary, intellectual, military, legal, media, research, etc.) as a result of sociopolitical divisions and popular mobilisations on one side or the other. See Duclert 1994 and 1997, Charle 1986, 1990 and 1996, Winock 1997, Kramberger 2008 and relevant bibliography.

[11] And in this way summons to the collective consciousness and reinforces the reference to Voltaire's involvement in the Calas affair in the Enlightenment period (1761/62). See Kramberger 2008, 23, footnote 9.

[12] The mimetic component of the right wing, which constantly copies or assumes (only formally of course) the tactics of the left, is perfectly clear during the

It follows from this that both "intellectual" and "anti–intellectual" are concepts closely tied up with the reactionary activity of the French right wing in the sociopolitical struggle against the Dreyfusards.[13] In short, a semantic structure that derives from the complex relations in these conflicts. The reactions of the intellectual right wing and ultra–right–wing to Zola as an *intellectual* (new, different, critical, with great power to mobilise *pro causa* and acting *dans la cité* – in the civic space, as the French would say) now became – in all their arguments, discursive and media strategies and tactical moves – a paradigmatic schema of anti–intellectualism. In an article attacking Zola published on 1 February 1898, i.e. around two weeks after the appearance of "J'accuse…!", the anti–Dreyfusard Maurice Barrès (1862–1923) used the term "intellectual" as an insult for the first time. Zola and his supporters quickly inverted the term and used it as a positive label, thus in an instant defining their opponents as *anti–intellectuals* (anti–Dreyfusards). This resulted in a significant inversion which is today forgotten at the level of common knowledge but which in structural terms means that the discursive and argumentative procedures of the Dreyfusards are to a large extent identical with those which we call intellectual, while the anti–Dreyfusard discursive strategies and argumentative procedures (i.e. the *unthought* of the French ultra–right wing and the time of the affair) are a synonym for French anti–intellectualism and also, generally unreflectively, more broadly for [European] anti–intellectualism (Charle 1990, 1996, 308–312; cf. Johnston

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scandal: first the Dreyfusards establish the Ligue des droits de l'homme (Human Rights League), then the anti–Dreyfusards follow them with the Ligue de la Patrie française (League of the French Fatherland). In the wake of Zola's involvement the Dreyfusards, to the great indignation of the anti–Dreyfusards, circulated several petitions and collected signatures in support of the writer, with the participation of a considerable number of the country's prominent academicians and figures from the world of the arts. When the right wing realised that indignation was not enough, and that signing petitions was an effective way to mobilise people, the anti–Dreyfusard camp acted in the same way. See Kramberger 2008 and the relevant bibliography.

[13] More precisely, anti–intellectualism proved itself to be a socially adaptable and multiform phenomenon which took root in at least two different environments: the first was the anti–Dreyfusard nationalist right wing (the extreme right), the social component of which was the petite bourgeoisie and lower bureaucracy; the second was the revolutionary syndicalist left wing (the extreme left), which – at least until the entry of the socialist Jean Jaurès into the affair on the side of the Dreyfusards – was strongly imbued with anti–Semitic prejudices (the Jews were represented as capitalists and exploiters of the poor). See Balmand 1992, 32.

1974, Winock 1997).[14] To the extent that during the process of democratisation and secularisation in the nineteenth century (Chadwick 1995) the place previously reserved for the clergy was filled by intellectuals (as Pascal Balmand 1992, reminds us; see also Sapiro 2003), it is understandable that in the Dreyfus affair, which is the culmination of all these developments and social restructurings in France, the opponents of the fragile Republican equilibrium spontaneously rebelled and reactivated old prejudices in order to engage systematically with the symbolic and imaginary machinery of this new social and mental edifice.

In order to understand why the components of the anti–intellectual formulation (of the intellectual) were already fully elaborated in the period in which intellectuals were constituting themselves as a specific fraction of the social body, we need to study the conditions which enabled the appearance of intellectuals in the first place. In this connection, Pascal Balmand (1992, 35–36) observes that anti–intellectualism would not have been able to develop if cultural policy of the French Third Republic had not attributed to intellectuals the symbolically decisive function of guardians of universal values and exalted them as bulwarks of civil society legitimacy.[15]

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[14] As Christophe Charle (1996, 336–337) notes, the connection of anti–intellectualism to anti–Semitism is already intensely present in the work of the conservative German historian Treitschke. In Charle's opinion, the mechanisms and essential themes which we later find in the background of the value system of anti–intellectualism (anti–Semitism) are already present in his discourse in the mid–nineteenth century. When anti–Semitism became the legalised (majority) ideology in Austria with Karl Lueger (elected mayor of Vienna eight times in succession and in office from 1897 to 1910), an admirer of the French anti–Semite Édouard Drumont (who in 1889 founded the Ligue antisémitique de France), we may see this at the same time as an invisible but undoubted and very widespread normalisation of anti–intellectualism. See also Balmand (1992), who mentions the bond between anti–intellectualism and anti–Semitism, defining the former as a "type of discourse or ideological position which openly manifests global hostility towards intellectuals as specific actors of political life" (ibid., 32).

[15] The difficult and ambivalent role of the intellectual in France during and after the affair is summed up well by Charles Péguy (1873–1914) – a product of Republican meritocracy who threw himself into the affair as an ardent Dreyfusard but who over time, as a result of a paradoxical socio–historical itinerary, became an advocate of the most radical anti–intellectualism. If Barrès constituted the prototype of the anti–intellectual, his model was followed by several anti–intellectual incarnations of different profiles: Drieu La Rochelle, for example, represents the anti–intellectualism of the uneasy denial of the self and of reflection, and through his example of complete *disponibilité idéologique* (i.e. conformity) influenced numerous successors; Peguy and Bernanos represent the anti–

Rather than repeat my analysis of the anti–intellectual discursive positions of Brunetière, Barrès, Maurras, Drumont and other leading anti–Semites and anti–Dreyfusards published elsewhere (Kramberger 2008), I shall summarise some of its key characteristics here in the form of a table (see Table 4–1).

Table 4–1 Characteristic figures of anti–intellectualism at the time of Dreyfus affair

CHARACTERISTIC FIGURES OF ANTI–INTELLECTUALISM
(in the discourses of the anti–Dreyfusards, i.e. in the period of the anti–intellectual constitution)
negative perception of the term and notion of the "intellectual"
physical–anthropological description, similar to descriptions of Jews in anti–Semitic discourse (weakness, scrawniness, pallor, etc.), the "intellectual" is a place of crystallisation of counter–values and all decadent and pathogenic fermentations, use of a medicalised discourse is frequent (pathologisation of the intellectual as a "sick" or "unhealthy" element of society)
sociopolitical categorisation: untenability and rejection of internationalism (the intellectual as a traitor to the nation), fear of the clear–sightedness and emancipatory dimension of knowledge (the intellectual as demagogue leading people onto the "wrong path")
antagonistic–juridical (judgemental) discourse, used to demean the new or oppositions such as us/them, ours/yours, black/white, etc.
fixing the term "intellectual" in a network of negative connotations of other negatively understood words (e.g. treachery, lie, disorder, degeneration, pathology, illness, pornography, aristocratic arrogance) and *depriving intellectuals of every legitimacy*
essentialist discourse of rootedness, an organic and fixed ascription to a place, naturalisations, truisms

intellectualism of Catholic integralists, more emotional than rational; Céline represents the anti–intellectualism of the despairing and misanthropic; Jacques Perret, Marcel Aymé and Roger Nimier represents the anti–intellectualism of right–wing anarchism, etc. (Balmand 1992, 37). Pascal Balmand (ibid.) sees a certain stability and continuity in the evolution of French anti–intellectualism from the time of the Dreyfus affair until the last third of the twentieth century. A key element of this continuity is the fusion of anti–intellectualism with extremist insurrectionary movements that do not recognise parliamentarianism and Democratic processes and viscerally oppose individualism.

prohibition of intervention in social reality in the present (the strict separation of unworldly science and supposedly worthless intellectual engagement in reality): preservation of the status quo of the regime (the other side of this dispositive is the establishment of "temporal distance" as the only positive tool that prevents and blocks immediate intervention in social reality)
resistance to "sterile" abstract thinking (disdain for the study of objects that are invisible and intangible), blocking, prevention of opportunities to cultivate concentrated and collected thought, the attentive and alert spirit that leads to knowledge and new ideas
directly invective or metaphorical and seemingly erudite pseudo–argumentation in place of analytical critical reflection (a typical figure of the interruption of dialogue or polemic is the *argumentum ad personam* which thwarts debate and moves it from the level of argument to the field of personal detraction)
preoccupation with form (etiquette) and decency or moralising (as opposed to with the content of an utterance); this is the discourse of censorship, blockade and aporia (a closed discursive structure)
praise of spontaneity, instinct and hostility towards reason, rationalisation, "coldly analytical" speech (in this way the anti–intellectual tries to construct the supposed "superiority of intellectuals" over other people and introduce the superiority of religion over science)
discussions, polemics and speech without a cognitive dimension (rejection of elaborated and differentiated speech in favour of short and simple utterances that are understood by "common sense", a mnemonic–scholastic belief structure that does not permit a critical reflection and relies on authority)
racist–nationalist–xenophobic categorial apparatus (intolerance of foreigners, the other and the different)

The public polemic involving several Dreyfusards and the anti–Dreyfusard literary historian Ferdinand Brunetière (1849–1906)[16] is a place of key anti–intellectual discursive and procedural strategies and, as such, a place of memory (*lieu de mémoire*) of anti–intellectualism and a place of oblivion (*lieu d'oubli*) of the intellectual as a product of the critically–reflexive use of the intellect in the European context, since

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[16] An important figure of the French right wing and French culture from 1895, when he converted to Roman Catholicism. He was editor of *Revue des deux Mondes* and a grim opponent of Émile Zola and other intellectuals, particularly Émile Durkheim and Gabriel Monod. For more about his anti–intellectual discursive positions, which he set out in 1898 in a *brochure* entitled *Après le procès, réponse à quelques "intellectuels"*, and also in his numerous polemical writings, see Kramberger 2008.

almost all prominent European media followed the affair and took sides in it (an extensive archive exists of correspondence from key figures in the Dreyfus affair, including a series of letters from other countries) – in this way contributing to the universalisation of this originally French "division of souls".[17]

Since anti–intellectualism has no positive characteristic or definition *eo ipso*, it had to create an enemy, the odious image of the "intellectual" who was held to be selfish, eccentric, weak and indecent (see Mosse 1985). Vincent Duclert also observes a fundamental contradiction in the fact that anti–intellectuals are constantly striving to give an intellectual basis to a doctrine that actually challenges the power of the intelligence (1997, 75).

The sociopolitical birth of the new conception of the intellectual, i.e. a person of secular and critical habitus engaged in the public sphere for Republican virtues, could – as Christophe Charle (1996, 310–311) warns – easily have degenerated into a pejorative social representation had there not been in France at that time a political–institutional background (an important role was played here by the Human Rights League, and also by some left–wing newspapers) that energetically maintained its vivid and positive image.

A particularly significant role in this process of the positive transmission of meaning was played by the *universités populaires* which began to be established in France in this period, for reasons closely

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[17] Naturally the effects of these polemics also reached Slovenia, although numerous scholars in Slovenia like to deny influences with which they are not familiar or which they do not recognise (particularly French influences in comparison to German and Austrian ones): the fact that the Slovene "intellectual" environment in the twentieth century chose Brunetière's version of the understanding of reality (Brunetière goes on to become a key reference of comparative literature in the Slovene context, while, in Slovenia, the rejection of Zola as a "pornographer" and the decisive initial rejection of the Dreyfusard Durkheim as an unimportant sociologist are firmly fixed in the context of social oppositions in the French world, which in their provincial reception became reflectionless, etc.), naturally without a broader understanding and context, is evidence that the right–wing mentality option then prevailed and essentially dictated the imaginary, and thus also the real activity, of society. It would therefore be more correct to call the Slovene environment, until it thoroughly reflects these currents and procedures (within each discipline separately), by its proper name: basically anti–intellectual (this influence is clear even later – at the time of the founding of the University of Ljubljana). Thus it has remained right up to the present day, when anti–intellectual elements in it are once again being strengthened by neoliberalism, with its worship of the market, its mania for measuring and quantifying, and its pragmatism. Cf. Žagar and Krašovec 2011.

connected to the affair: that of giving people the tools to enable them to think about social situations and educating them to the extent that they are able to react when the situation worsens, while at the same time confronting them with the necessity of continuous reflection in connection with their real civic function and the aberrations of the formal education system (Durkheim, 1904; Charle, 1996: 275–281, 309–352; Kramberger, 2008). The key concepts behind the role of these *universités populaires* in shaping the civic habitus may thus actually be considered forerunners of the axiological categories of *critical pedagogy*.

It is thus precisely at the time of the Dreyfus affair that in the case of numerous French intellectuals in a modern European context we encounter an important understanding of the pedagogical insufficiency of official educational institutions and the weakness of formal(ised) knowledge which lacks a key component of didactic efforts: that of encouraging and supporting critical or cognitive reflection on past and present in learners, and gradually converting it into an instrument capable of effectively challenging the social forms of subjugation and domination, in other words a tool of social transformation. This opened the doors to additional non–formally and informally acquired knowledge (with, in France, the consensus of the majority of intellectuals at that time).[18] France's *universités populaires* henceforth allowed informal debates between the most powerful French intellectuals and university professors of the day (Durkheim, for example, enjoyed giving lectures there; see Durkheim 1904) and people who were interested in current events in society and in understanding them. According to Charle (1996, 311), the struggle for the democratisation of education and the specifically fought–for and constructed intellectual place of memory of the left at *universités populaires* continued right up to the 1960s – and is actually still going on today (against the neoliberalisation of education).

The intellectual and intellectuals in other European countries

Britain. The use of the term "intellectual" as a noun in English may, according to Charle (1996, 312–326), predate its equivalent use in French, but in contrast with the French orientation, despite numerous convergences between the British Isles and the continent, in its British context the word never had an irreducible political and idiosyncratic disposition for merely secular traditions, nor did it have a dimension of

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[18] More on this in Mercier 1986.

spectacular political mobilisation that would have placed it in mass circulation. Thus in the late nineteenth century, in a British context in which the education of a relatively narrow class (the gentry) took place in an existentially comfortable "gentlemanly" spirit, it did not change the relationship between intellectuals and the political authorities as radically as it did in France as a result of the tensions surrounding the Dreyfus affair.

The legitimacy and life of intellectuals in late–nineteenth– and early–twentieth–century Britain remained largely unchallenged categories until the founding of the Fabian Society, which paved the way for changes in the political perception of the intellectual field in Britain (Hobsbawm 1964). The Fabians, whose number included Sidney Webb, G. B. Shaw, H. G. Wells and Beatrice Webb (neé Potter), were recruited from the petite bourgeoisie and as such, when it came to schooling, were despite their brilliance limited to less important institutions, since the highest (where the intellectual aristocracy were nurtured) were financially inaccessible to them. Their struggle derives from this social barrier, which prevented their vertical mobility but at the same time led them down numerous paths of non–formally acquired knowledge. In Britain, however, the development of this struggle took place somewhat differently; owing to the numerous new journals and other media, intellectuals were offered positions which, despite everything, enabled relatively good progress and, later, solid positions from which to place demands for reform. Because of this framework of accessible possibilities for *social permeability*, British intellectuals are closer to the reformist ideal than to the revolutionary one.

Spain: In Spain the development of intellectuals as a political force in the late nineteenth century is akin to development in France, which is undoubtedly in part the effect of proximity, cultural exchanges and membership of the same Romance–speaking and European Catholic communities. Although the situation in Spain in around 1900 was difficult (63.7% of the population were illiterate and the country was predominantly rural; Charle 1996, 328), intellectuals in the cities made great efforts to come into contact with the populace. The fact was, however, that social conditions for this were considerably worse than in France (one major obstacle was the illiteracy of the population, while another was the powerful conservative league of Catholics which dominated the intellectual education of both the upper classes and the common people). Owing to the strong centralisation and the conservative closure to research that was not "consecrated", says Christophe Charle (1996, 329), Spanish universities were not bastions of intellectual activity.

For this reason the intellectual struggle of the late nineteenth century in Spain took the form of educating the people in the spirit of the Enlightenment against the ecclesiastical social hegemony, in order to expand the sphere of public freedoms and in favour of an intellectual opening towards other countries and in opposition to the national and military vice in which the country was held (ibid.).

At a time of national crisis (following Spain's defeat in the Spanish–American War of 1898), a favourable political framework was established for a reformist project in the direction of the modernisation of Spain (this period also saw the appearance of the "Generation of '98"), within which Spanish intellectuals strengthened a number of important Spanish institutions (*ateneos*, publishing houses and periodicals such as *La España Moderna*, *Germinal*, *La Revista Blanca*, etc.) and equipped them for effective international cultural exchange. Culturally engaged Spanish intellectuals had no reservations about critical publications of their views in the daily press, which served as a tribune or forum (Leopoldo Alas and Miguel de Unamuno, for example, published more than 2,500 newspaper articles). Unlike in France, where the intellectual mobilisation at the time of the Dreyfus affair mainly took place in the Paris region, in Spain it was the peripheral regions (particularly the Basque Country and Catalonia) and smaller centres (including Bilbao and Oviedo) that proved to be places of innovation and significant social shifts.[19]

The clash of Spanish intellectuals – not only in the field of education but also in the context of social struggles regarding the protection of rights against authoritarian regimes in the public sphere – with the organic intellectuals (in the Gramscian sense) of the Catholic Church later intensified, rather as it did in France. Taking place in Spain simultaneously with the Dreyfus affair in France was the "Montjuich" affair (Montjuïc, to give it its modern spelling, is a hill in Barcelona topped by a castle that was converted into a notorious prison), which united progressive Spanish forces and intellectuals in their opposition to the social isolation and

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[19] This non–exclusivity in terms of the contribution of smaller centres to progressive educational currents in Spain is something of an exception which, among other things, saw many professors from small universities occupy important administrative positions and help disseminate innovative university policy throughout Spain. Within the new Ministry of Education, for example, Rafael Altamira (1866–1951), a respected law–history professor from the University of Oviedo, became Director General of Primary Education (*Director General de Enseñanza Primaria*) for the whole of Spain (*Director General de Enseñanza Primaria*). Cf. Charle 1996, 331.

torture of anarchists practised by the police.[20] When Francesc Ferrer i
Guàrdia (1859–1909), a pioneer of libertarian rationalist education, was
sentenced to death and executed in Barcelona in 1909, a division of souls
began which was to have very profound effects, since the upheavals also
reflected past unreflective representations of history that demanded a
critical re–evaluation of illusory concepts and religious dogmas (Charle
1996, 332–333, Anderson 2009).

Germany. For numerous and complex reasons that characterised the
rivalry between the Francophone and German–speaking worlds, German
intellectuals in the early twentieth century did not adopt the French
concept of the "intellectual" and it remained limited to writings on the
Dreyfus affair. The "autochthonous" German concept of intelligentsia
(*Intelligenz*) remained, in the Germanic context, the priority place of
discourse for the definition of agents with cultural capital and education
appropriate to the national character – i.e. *Bildung* (see Assmann 1993). It
is interesting that in Germany the negative connotation of the term
"intellectual", which otherwise (in France) originally belonged to the
right–wing, i.e. anti–intellectual/anti–Dreyfusard register, was used as an
instrument in some notable German Francophobic texts, while the
intellectual became the presumed enemy of German *Kultur*.[21] This
connotation only began to become positive after the fall of the empire (in
November 1918 with the abdication of Wilhelm II)[22], and strengthened in
the interwar period and with the Weimar avant–garde. Christophe Charle
(1996, 334–336) believes that this decision derived from the German
nominalistic basis, which is (was) incompatible with a sociocultural

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[20] More on this affair in Anderson 2009.

[21] As distinguished from French *civilisation*, of course. See Le Rider 1994. The
distinction between the German and French conceptions of intellectuals is deeper
and derives from key differences between *Lumières* and *Aufklärung*. Within the
latter, many researchers of the Enlightenment (I. Berlin, W. Barrett, P. Venturi,
etc.) see a powerful anti–Enlightenment (*Gegenaufklärung*) current which resists
the radical and existentially consistent (realised in practice) French Enlightenment
paradigm in at least three directions: against reason (French rationalism); against
(French) universalism and against (French) empiricism (the direct intervention in
reality). This conservative anti–Enlightenment current, which carries with it the
fundamental elements of anti–intellectualism, strengthened and became dominant
in the Germany of the nineteenth century and is the basis for the *Historismus* of the
German national–political historical episteme. I have written extensively on this in
my book *Historiografska divergenca [Historiographic Divergence]*; see
Kramberger 2007, 73–104 and 204–257, cf. also Rotar 2007b, 192–196.

[22] Wilhelm II (1859 –1941; reign 1888 –1918), German emperor.

perspective, particularly in its going beyond merely denotative discursive formations in order to arrive at more complex origins and relations between social and symbolic structures. He adds, of course, that at the time of the Dreyfus affair and slightly afterwards there existed in the German sphere (particularly in the social democratic circles around Kautsky) initiatives, similar to intellectual initiatives, the theoretical purpose of which was to form a mobilising group as a social force (e.g. the engagement of the reading public around the censorship of the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, which greatly increased the circulation of the publication, now threatened with suppression).[23] In complete contrast to the Spanish experience, on the other hand, is the engagement of German academics in the public sphere; the Arons affair (1899–1900) provides a good illustration of German arrogance and the tactlessness of the authorities in relation to the talented young physicist, who wished to attain habilitation as a *Privatdozent* but whose appointment was prevented by the authorities (senior functionaries) when, with great indignation and the political instrumentalisation of academic procedures, they observed that Leo Arons had publicly expressed support for the Social Democrats (Charle 1996, 338–339). In this sense we can see here how the authorities in the German social space on the one hand watchfully supervised access to the officially consecrated places of knowledge transmission, and on the other, by favouring a formalised curriculum, eliminated other competing non–formal and – particularly – informal didactic approaches, especially those which could arm students with emancipatory and socially applicable mental tools.

Italy. The absence of an intellectual centre in the Italian context and the relative weak literate class (in 1900 around 56.3% of the population were apparently still illiterate – Charle, 1996: 346) reveal weaknesses that were even greater than those in Spain and Russia in the same period. Accordingly, the centre of activity of Italian "intellectuals" at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century was outside Italy – in Paris. It was there that the majority of the Italian avant–garde gravitated (Marinetti published the Futurist Manifesto on the cover of *Le Figaro* in February 1909). It is precisely because of this long continuity, writes Charle (ibid.) that Italian writers still enjoy a privileged position today. Unlike the exiles from the countries of Central Europe, but

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[23] And observes that the absence of a strong and influential anarchist force in (morally rigid and State interventionist) Germany contributed to the fact that the political struggle between the various parties was intellectually and verbally less honed, less radical and, above all, briefer than in France.

spiritually close to those of the Romance world, Italian professors participated more freely in political debates; a good example of the accumulation of political functions characteristic of Italian university professors and researchers is that of one of the most significant Italian intellectuals of the late nineteenth century, Giosuè Carducci (1835–1907).

Two further specific factors exist in Italy. On the one hand the connection between university professors and the radical left wing (the example of Enrico Ferri, Cesare Lombrso, Arturo Labriola, Vilfredo Pareto, etc.), which is unimaginable in Germany and Austria, but perfectly possible in France, and on the other hand the relatively strong connection of organic intellectuals with the Catholic Church (Charle 1996, 346–351).

Austria. The Austrian model of "member of the intelligentsia" (we cannot talk about intellectuals, for reasons similar to those that apply in the German context)[24] – to a large extent this agrees with what we have already said about the anti–intellectual/anti–Semite[25] (more strongly profiled than in the German context, since the religious–Catholic– component in Austria is incomparably more inflexible and violent than in Germany) – is something somewhat special in this period and applies to the whole of Mitteleuropa, full of persecuted nomadic and more or less

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[24] The Austrian mental space and imaginary should be understood as a heightened German orientation, in other words positioned a step or two towards the right or the ultra–right (strong re–Catholicisation created conditions for a more rigid and imperative religious paradigm which persecuted and still persecutes almost every germ of innovative or critical thought). I have written about this additional shift to the right in the Austrian provinces and its implications for mentality right up to the present day in my analysis of an article on the reception of the Dreyfus affair in Slovenia – see Kramberger 2009b.

[25] Paradoxically, as a result of this fusion and inversion, it is revealed that the only social group (and here I am not alluding to an ethnic category) that corresponds to the definition of intellectuals, in Vienna (and thus in Mitteleuropa) actually consists of the Jews themselves. In Zweig's description in *The World of Yesterday*, the emancipatory–intellectual function of the Jews in Vienna at the end of the century is extremely important: "They were the real audience; they filled the theatres and the concert halls, they bought the books and the pictures, they visited the exhibitions, and with their more mobile understanding, little hampered by tradition, they were the exponents and champions of all that was new" (cf. Charle 1996, 276–277; otherwise see Zweig 1982 or the first edition of 1942). On the superposition and fusion of intellectuals and Jews as a common discursive topos among anti–intellectuals/anti–Semites (e.g. in Drieu La Rochelle or Céline – the latter even invents the *intellectual Talmudist*, which sums up well the imaginary closeness of the phantasms of both phenomena), see Balmand 1992, cf. Mosse 1985.

cultivated existences influencing each other fleetingly, reciprocally and transnationally, but never remaining for long in any environment of this space. Neither Vienna as the metropolis that created minimum conditions for the emergence of the brilliant and powerful Viennese avant–garde (with intellectual potency) but soon afterwards stifled it (anti–intellectually/anti–Semitically) and excluded its protagonists, nor the smaller cultural centres that served as temporary refuges for exiles but were by no means creatively inspiring places, were capable of creating sufficient *intellectual* and *plural* conditions in which innovative ideas based on scientific considerations could really develop, communicate with each other, and take permanent root among people.[26] William R. Everdell, in his research into the Viennese avant–garde and the *Moderne* (modernism), describes Vienna as follows:

> […] Vienna had never been the sort of city that looked to the future. In the 1890s it was the capital of the most Catholic country east of Spain, where once a year on Corpus Christi Day the Emperor appeared on foot leading the other classes, in order of rank, in procession to the cathedral. It was the capital of an empire of peasants where in some provinces thirty–three percent of the land might be owned by one or two percent of the population. It was the city of waltzes and whipped cream (*schlock*[27], as they called it in dialect), where Metternich was still remembered fondly for having turned back clock after Napoleon. When Baron Franz von Uchatius invented a motion picture projector in the 1850s, he used it to teach ballistics and sold it to a local stage magician. When Siegfried Marcus drove Vienna's first automobile down the street in 1875, he got not a single order. When Viennese founded the world's first organized aviation institute in 1880, no one noticed; twenty years later, when Wilhelm Kress tried to fly a gasoline–powered airplane two years before Kitty Hawk, he crashed and was forgotten. Still later, Hermann Oberth's dissertation on space rockets was rejected by the city's university. As for Vienna's Emperor Franz Josef, he remained sceptical of telegraphs, telephones, type–writers, electric lights, and elevators well into the 1890s, and didn't ride in an automobile until England's Edward VII shamed him into it in 1908, his sixtieth year on the throne. Early in his reign, even railroads had been banned because they might bring on revolution, and his daughter–in–law Princess Stephanie had had to pay to have bathrooms constructed in his palace. The situation had not much changed for Austria since Napoleon had taken the title of Holy Roman Emperor away from Franz Josef's

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[26] On the flowering and social assassination of the Viennese avant–garde, see Schorske 1980, Pollak 1984 and Everdell 1997.
[27] The word shares an origin with the English word "slag" in the sense of dross.

grandfather, prompting the latter to call his kingdom "a worm–eaten house. Take away part of it, and the rest might collapse." (1997, 13–14)

Although after all this it may seem that this was an impossible place for creative and thinking people, Vienna nevertheless blossomed for a brief instant. But, continues Everdell:

> […] originality was never at home there. One by one all of the great Viennese Modernists ran into trouble in Vienna, from Sigmund Freud and Ludwig Boltzmann to Arnold Schoenberg, Arthur Schnitzler, Adolf Loos, Oskar Kokoschka, Erwin Schrödinger, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Eventually almost all of them left. As one of them summed it up, "This Vienna possesses, in addition to other significant qualities, the extraordinary gift of banishing its most worthwhile talents, or of humiliating them." (1997, 14)

On the one hand, then, one is struck by the talent of individuals with intellectual and cognitive capacity in Vienna and Mitteleuropa, and on the other by the total, entirely bureaucratic lack of interest on the part of the authorities in their existence and their achievements. The *Jung Wien* generation of "intellectuals" did not have a social space within which to delineate its "places"; it did not have strongholds for the social struggle, except inner strongholds (within itself), and therefore constructed strongholds in the self–sufficient register of aesthetics and in face of (and against) political–civic participation in the public space. For this reason, too, the definition of intellectuals in the Austrian context is furthest from the democratic and critical intellectual, vitally involved in the public sphere, in France and Spain – and closest to the definition of the anti–intellectual/anti–Semite (it is actually a paradoxically embodied paradigm of the latter).

Everdell clearly shows how, in the Vienna of the early twentieth century, enlightenment was still persecuted while positivism and scientism were exalted; how, once they realised what kind of place it was, even immigrants fled; and how "nineteenth–century culture" constantly interfered in the lives of people, with a lack of understanding of twentieth–century ideas.

> "In Vienna, Modernism struggled constantly to be born, but in order to understand what Modernism was not, in order to understand what it replaced and against what it was struggling, it is necessary to examine Vienna" (ibid.).

The latter, we could say, also applies to Viennese intellectuals and the intellectual: in order to understand what intellectuals are not in Mitteleuropa, it is necessary to examine the Viennese sphere of influence and understand what it was that took their place. This, in fact, is the domicile of a particular anti–intellectual (and at the same time, as we have already indicated, anti–Semitic and anti–Modernist) model, which under the dual sceptre of the Habsburgs took hold in most parts of Central Europe (cf. Ducreux 2000, Ducreux and Marès 2003).

The Viennese cultural matrix: the unreflective, anti–intellectual heritage of the Austrian sphere in the provincial environment (particularly of Slovenia)

The Viennese cultural matrix, as Everdell (1997) defines it, was naturalised to such a degree that it became the most important part of the identity of the peoples or nations which, as nation–states or parts of these states, inherited from the defunct Dual Monarchy the majority of its redundant ideological baggage, from Biedermeier taste to clericalism and more besides – without actually participating – with the exception of Bohemia and, to a much smaller extent, Trieste – in European cultural and intellectual life. This matrix has remained the criterion of reality in the culture of its offspring, which are poor (provincial) in almost every sense (several criteria existed at the level of illusions but not at the level of social reality; these illusions are today additionally protected not only by linguistic borders but also by state borders).

In the Austrian (Austro–Hungarian) provinces in which non–German and non–Hungarian languages were spoken, an establishing of linguistic communities was launched under the supervision of the Church. This was designed to block the circulation of information about what was happening in the world and thus prevent contamination with revolutionary ideologies, something that would not be possible to achieve in the case of a linguistically homogeneous population (for more on this process see Rotar 2004, 2005/2006, 2007b). The idea of a "nation" confined to the peasant class, of which the most prominent representative in Carniola and other partly Slovene–speaking environments was Anton Martin Slomšek,[28] is an authentic product of Kopitar's[29] (i.e. Metternich's[30]) policy and that of the

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[28] Anton Martin Slomšek (1800–1862, bishop 1846–1862), Catholic priest, bishop, writer, poet, educator, beatified 1999.
[29] Bartholomäus Kopitar (1780–1844), linguist, imperial censor, Metternichian functionary, supporter of Austroslavism.

Vatican at that time (see Rotar 2005/2006). It was a question of establishing the cultural, social and political impermeability of linguistic groups. The consequences of this policy of demolishing territorial societies may be classified into four groups, as follows:

1. *the creation of a "mentality boundary" between Mediterranean and inland regions*, to which the final elimination of the Venetian Republic as a sovereign political entity (1797) undoubtedly contributed its share, although this does not change the nature and objectives of regional policy. In the second half of the nineteenth century a group of provinces (part of Tyrol, Transylvania, Carinthia, Carniola) became an area of economic, cultural, political and urban stagnation in the empire. Roughly half of this area became the object of disguised or barely indicated territorial pretensions on the part of the Slovenes (more nationally conscious cultural figures than politicians, who for the most part were substituted by cultural figures throughout the nineteenth century);

2. *the formation of another mentality boundary, almost a civilisational boundary, between the "inner" (old Austrian) areas of stagnation and areas of exceptional development (at least in the economic sense)* and, in part, political–ideological and cultural growth (above all the Trieste, Graz, Vienna and Prague regions), which did not lead to a softening of hierarchies, to an opening up, and to democratisation either at the level of mentalities and imaginaries or at the level of social and administrative organisation;

3. *the suppression and substitution of the Enlightenment (civic) dispositive*, more precisely the project of society (education of the common people with the help of a state and provincial system of educational units, improvement of the economy, introduction of vertical promotion for a progressively greater share of the population, linguistic and religious freedom and equality) developed and put into practice by Enlightenment thinkers (Kumerdej,[31] Linhart,[32] Edling,[33] Kuralt,[34] Zois,[35] etc.; see Kramberger 2007,

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[30] Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar, Fürst von Metternich–Winneburg zu Beilstein (1773–1859), diplomat and foreign minister of the Austrian Empire.
[31] Blasius Kumerdey (Blaž Kumerdej) (1738–1805), Enlightenment thinker, linguist, founder of schools and director of the *Normalschule* in Ljubljana.
[32] Anton Thomas (Tomaž) Linhart (1756–1795), historian, playwright, poet, collector of ethnographic material, founder of schools and Enlightenment thinker.
[33] Johann Nepomuk Jakob, Graf von Edling (1751 –1793), Enlightenment thinker, founder of schools, translator.

Rotar 2007b) with the tribal–nationalistic (formation of the Slovenes as a *peasant nation/people*; the cultural–linguistic disintegration of multilingual provinces and the emergence of hostility among linguistic–national groups, the relaunching of a faith–centred mental basis for the construction of the nation, based on a patriarchal–authoritarian model, the introduction of a mnemonic–scholastic type of transmission of knowledge and the neglect of the critical–reflexive model); and a change in the content of political concepts (people, freedom, individuality, serfdom, citizenship, etc.) from an Enlightenment–based and emancipatory project into a constellation of subordination, repression and control effected by a group of writers and conjunctural manipulators, whose intellectual mediocrity (the foundations of anti–intellectualism) and local limitedness can only be characterised as obscurantists (in the Slovene environment these *Dunkelmänner* include Jarnik,[36] Majar,[37] Koseski,[38] Bleiweis,[39] Kopitar, Cigler,[40] etc.);

4. *a change in the conception of the culture, functionality and purpose of education, from the orientation and development of people's aspirations and numerous non–formal methods of acquiring knowledge in the Enlightenment*[41] *to a model of total control of the life of society and prescribed knowledge*, which occurs with the prolongation of provincialism in the *Vormärz* period with all the characteristics or exaltation of the *provincial* in the period that begin in the 1820s and has not yet ended.

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[34] Martin Kuralt (1757–1845), Catholic priest, Enlightenment thinker, poet, librarian and journalist.

[35] Sigmund (Žiga) Zois, Freiherr von Edelstein (1747–1819), natural scientist, library owner and patron of Carniolan proponents of the Enlightenment.

[36] Urban Jarnik (1784–1844), priest and writer, poet, historian, ethnographer and linguist.

[37] Matija Majar, pseudonym "Ziljski" (1809–1892), priest, amateur ethnographer, linguist, theologian.

[38] Janez Vesel, pseudonym "Jovan Koseski" (1798–1844), lawyer and extremely popular and widely promoted poet.

[39] Janez Bleiweis, Ritter von Trstenik (1808 –1881), veterinarian, journalist, editor and politician.

[40] Janez Cigler (1792–1869), Catholic priest, writer and poet.

[41] For the pedagogical methods of the Enlightenment see Kramberger 2007, 86–105, 116–126 and 149–154.

In such a sealed social dispositive, the figures of anti–intellectualism, which in France remained more or less outside the formal schooling system, were, in the Slovene social space, considered as privileged categories within the official schooling system, namely as "intellectual" *topoi*. Because of this inversion and the semantic shift of intellectual procedures, which are already present in a less aggressive form in the German and Austrian social space and which within central Europe probably do not only concern Slovenia, the only props that are left for the potential development of critical thought (or *thinking* in general) are non–formal and informal educational practices. However, the latter in particular have nothing at their disposal in the Slovene social space that could establish them as legitimate and render possible their existence. This paradox has been aggravated once again in the age of neoliberalism.

By way of a conclusion

If the neoconservative revolution and neoliberalism (the "fathers" of which are, after all, from central Europe: Hayek[42] and Friedman,[43] one Viennese and the other of Hungarian descent, while the numerical relationships between the provenances of those attending the inaugural neoliberal meeting in Mont Pèlerin confirm this colouring) are the posthumous products of the anti–intellectualism of both former capitals of the empire, the successful – and almost unbearably effortless – neoliberal and neoconservative conquest of the countries of Central Europe is actually, if not a monarchist reconquest, certainly an anti–intellectual, obscurantist one, worthy of the Vormärz model and its continuation in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Perhaps now, if we attempt to place certain events in a linear perspective, we can also understand slightly better that intellectual history constantly reminds us, as I have noted elsewhere (see Kramberger 2008, 53), that the intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in different European and non–European contexts established themselves *in relation to a particular social truth and the conditions of its origin* and *in the critical use of this relationship*. By undermining and denying this relationship in every possible way, anti–intellectualism actually forced intellectuals to consciously embrace it and save it from the

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[42] Friedrich August von Hayek (1899–1992), philosopher and economist of the Austrian School, promoter of neoliberalism in the United Kingdom and around the world.
[43] Milton Friedman (1912–2006), US economist, statistician and writer, promoter of neoliberalism and co–author of the hegemonistic economic policy of the USA.

abyss of oblivion. Thus anti–intellectualism compelled – and still compels – intellectuals to undertake an important activity and task, namely that they systematically and continuously oppose (or should oppose, if they are supposed to be intellectuals) socially induced hatred, political–ideological instrumentalisations and exclusion in all its forms. The defence of democracy, reason, marginalised people – particularly women, but also others (foreigners, Jews, homosexuals, etc.) – establishes and defines the intellectual, just as the absence of such engagement defines the anti–intellectual, whether or not he or she is aware of this. Where we are in this sense in the context of Slovenia is today more or less clear.

Despite everything, human initiative and obstinacy – in the perspective of critical revolutionary pedagogy, which we could characterise as *sperare aude* – are capable of changing various types of socio–historical determinations (the constraint of capital, normative quantification, the pernicious submission of basic sciences to market laws, economic exploitation, the devaluation of intellectual and other work, etc.) and "force a recomposition" of social relations. Yet this is an "ongoing struggle", as Peter McLaren (2003b) emphasises, not a redemptive panacea. The foundation of this struggle, which is closely connected to the struggle for the legitimacy of non–formally and, even more so, informally acquired knowledge, cannot be anything other than an engaged and committed critical examination, that in an aggressively and officially formalised anti–intellectual environment such as that of central Europe, with its underlying non–reflected and profit–based social values, begins outside enforced and formalised pathways to knowledge. To counter detrimental homogenising tendencies in all segments of human life, we should create "pedagogical *spaces* and *contexts*" for new possibilities and new understandings (ibid.).

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CHAPTER FIVE

IN–BETWEEN LEARNING:
EXPOSING LEARNING IN FAMILY TRANSITIONS

NIVES LIČEN

Abstract

The article analyses learning in transitions in the context of the family system. The field of family learning is interpreted through the theory of biographical learning (Alheit, Dominicé, Demetrio) and the theory of transitional learning (Wildemeersch, Stroobants). Biographical learning is conceptualised as a process of (re)construction of identity, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. My research focused on two significant transitions in the family cycle, namely the birth of a child and the transition to an "empty nest". In the last part of the article a taxonomy of family learning is constructed by combining existential themes as fields of everyday learning and types of knowledge.

Keywords: biographical learning, family transition, narrative

Introduction

The framework for the consideration of learning in transitions in this article is represented by the concept of everyday learning. The latter has long been marginalised in relation to organised education – be it formal or non–formal – although it is important both for the development of the individual and for the development of the community. Different authors highlight one or other of these aspects in their research. Hager and Halliday (2009) emphasise the importance of informal learning/everyday learning for the development of the community, while Demetrio (1994, 2003), Dominicé (1992, 2000) and Josso (1991) underline its importance for the development of the identity of the individual.

Research interest in everyday learning grew in the last third of the last century, when research areas such as the sociology of everyday life, psychology of everyday life and anthropology of everyday life began to develop (see Certeau 1988, Nastran Ule 1993). Empirical research into everyday learning most often took place in an interdisciplinary context. Thus, for example, research into workplace learning (cf. Lave 2011, Marsick et al. 2009, Rogoff 2008, Linde 2009, Orr 1996, Lave and Wenger 1991) connected the concepts of linguistics, anthropology, psychology and pedagogy.

Since research into everyday learning starts with events, experiences, practices and narratives, we use a variety of analytical theories and methodological approaches. In this article I shall look at family transitions and – rather as Hallqvist (2012) does for work transitions – use biographical learning as an analytical tool to illustrate learning in two family transition periods, which I study empirically with the help of the narrative method. This article aims to shed some light on learning in two family transitions, namely the expansion stage (the birth of children) and the contraction stage (children leaving home), show what elements of these transitions are important in research into family learning, and present some possibilities for a taxonomy of family learning. I selected these two transitions because learning as a change in knowledge and identity is most clearly evident in periods when the family system is enlarging or reducing.

Following Wildemeersch and Stroobants (2009), I define *transition* as a period in which individuals are faced with relatively unpredictable changes in the dynamics between their life–course and the environment. Since people enter new periods in their life as relatively inexperienced individuals, this transition is a learning experience. Learning in these cases does not only include the transfer of already formulated knowledge or competences but also identity changes (cf. Hallqvist 2012, Alheit and Dausien 2000, Ecclestone, Biesta and Hughes 2010) and the development of new practices (innovative learning). With this in mind, I shall define knowledge as a many–layered structure with the help of research in cognitive psychology (Brunning, Schraw and Norby 2010, Taatgen 2005). The *knowledge* that is linked, in this article, to family learning includes declarative knowledge (i.e. knowledge of facts and of connections between facts and concepts, e.g. knowledge about controlling the heating system at home, knowledge about one's body and illnesses), procedural knowledge (ability to perform activities, performance of more or less complex procedures and practices, e.g. food preparation, child rearing) and so–called self–regulatory knowledge (i.e. the knowledge one has of oneself as a learning individual and which one uses to regulate emotions

and ways of thinking and acting). In the family these three types of knowledge are used to form habits, complex procedures, beliefs and values which are (or become) part of family practices and are embedded in the context of the family microculture and the macroculture of the environment.

Research method

In the analysis of everyday learning the methods most commonly used in empirical research are qualitative methods (cf. Biesta et al. 2011, West 2007, Goodley et al. 2004). In describing learning in our two transitions I shall use the findings from various studies and data from my own empirical narrative research, carried out in 2012 and 2013 as a continuation of research into the applicability of narrative methods to research into biographical learning (Ličen 2011a, b). Between 2012 and 2013 I collected nine life narratives with the help of thematic biographical interviews. All the narrators were women. They were selected consecutively, with each proposing the next. All of them were from the Western Slovenia region and all had at least a secondary school qualification (12 years of schooling). Participation was voluntary. The group included five women who had gone past the first phase of the postnatal period (child aged 1–3) and four whose children had already left home (away at university or married and left home). I met each narrator at least twice. Our conversations were partly unstructured conversations about family life as they observed it in their environment (i.e. they acted as informers with regard to events in their environment) and partly structured conversations relating to their transition). We began with two initial questions: how did they see family life in their environment and how did they themselves experience transitions in the family. Narration is a relational practice, so I was careful to take into account the fact that the story originates in relation to the narrator of the material and that this is a relationship in which the narrators are not merely the object of study but co–creators of the findings. It is also important to be aware that narratives always consist of true events and added interpretations. Human memory is selective when it comes to the formation of stories (cf. Boyd 2009), so nine narratives are too few to allow us to evaluate learning in transitions merely on their basis. We can, however, use them to complement other research.

The structured part of the narration took place according to the scheme developed by M. C. Josso (1991). The first phase of the narration includes an explanation of the subject's own story for the purpose of reconstruction of experiences; this is followed by a second phase of reflection on

experiences (e.g. questions on how a given feeling, knowledge or skill developed); the last phase consists of recognising different learning. When collecting data I also took into account the anthropological studies of family life carried out by M. Gullestad, using 15 informers who told her about their family life in an urban environment in Norway (Gullestad 1985). Of the nine stories/narratives that emerged in our multiple encounters and that in methodological terms could be considered case studies (cf. Creswell 2007), I used three that I judged to be typical to deal with the transition into parenthood, and three to deal with the transition from parenthood.

Following analysis of family life from the six selected cases of stories collected through empirical research, we established (I use the plural because the narrators also took part in the interpretation) that solidarity and cooperativeness prevailed in the families we researched. This cannot be generalised, but it can be taken as a description of the microculture in the selected cases. As I said earlier, I selected six narratives for this text. I analysed all six of them in part according to the principles of *grounded theory*, as developed by A. Strauss and J. Corbin, in part according to the principles of narrative analysis (Grbich 2007). I isolated the basic experiences, which I called "laboratories" of learning. The taxonomy for such an arrangement was formed deductively. I started with the division of existential themes posited by D. Demetrio (2003) as the source of learning. Having set up the basic taxonomic groups, I then verified whether, in the case of family learning, I could "fill" them with different phenomena. The four taxonomic groups for the classification of phenomena of family learning were as follows. The first covers love experiences, which include various types of love, such as eros and agape, generativity and ardour as part of passion and commitment in relationships. The second group represents action–based experiences relating to everyday activity (e.g. various practices, routines, daily chores, preparing meals, cleaning) and containing a dimension of effort. The third group are play experiences, dominated by fun, lightness and creativity without goals. The fourth type are grieving experiences. These are all events that include the loss of something (e.g. separation, death, sickness, pain, deceit).

Biographical learning

The concept of biographical learning began to be developed in the 1980s by Pierre Dominicé (in France) and Peter Alheit (in Germany) as "learning from life". It is connected to theories of experiential and transformative learning. Biographical learning is based on the individual's

abilities to face changes and change himself/herself, which is related to the concept of fluid identity, the playful self or the protean self (cf. Lifton 1993, Melucci 1996). Learning is defined in this model as a process of (re)construction of identity and knowledge, which takes place in a cultural context. We therefore understand biographical learning as a situational learning, in which the learning individual is not placed into an organised didactic environment and is not guided/directed by didactic strategies and goals.

We can use various theories in the interpretation of biographical learning. We can describe it with the help of analysis of the creation of neuronal connections in the formation of the autobiographical self (cf. Damasio 2012, Oliverio 2009), or we can trace the formation of symbolic forms and a reference framework. In the second case the autobiographical self is a mental story formed from experiences and interpersonal encounters (Blinder 2007). In our understanding of learning in this article we proceed from the second theory – or more precisely from cultural–constructivist theories of learning that follow symbolic interactionism and the theory of practice (see Mezirow and Taylor 2009, Taylor and Cranton 2012, Bateson 1972).

Because we are researching learning in everyday life, we define learning as an integral part of the life story/life–course. Knowledge is situated in the cultural environment (*situated knowledge*) and gains its importance in mutual relations (Alheit 2010, West 2007, Alheit and Dausein 2000), but the individual who learns is not passive in the reception of information. Biographical learning is a concept that assumes that the individual is an actor who is in a reflective relationship with regard to his or her own practices (Kristensson Uggla 2008). The individual is capable of changing his or her practice, creating new patterns of thinking and feeling, shaping new meanings, not by breaking ties with the past but by establishing an active relationship with the past. Narration (putting experiences into words) plays an important role in this process. The majority of learning in everyday learning remains unrecognised, and the knowledge that is formed and the developing self remain unconscious. The knowledge that is formed is tacit knowledge and is expressed in activity. In a given situation, the individual also uses tacit knowledge which he or she is unaware of having developed in the course of previous experiences. Biographical learning is therefore also defined by *implicitness*, since an essential part of biographical learning is implicit and a large part of learning takes place at a level which is not conscious. Knowledge develops as a parallel result and some changes that are the consequence of

learning are only understood by the individual once he or she is removed from them in time.

The cultural context of an event is very important for the definition and course of learning, since biographical learning does not only take place as an individual process but rather depends on communication and interaction with others and on the individual's involvement in the environment. Biographical learning includes the accumulation and transformation of knowledge, experiences and practices and the formation of meanings, which takes place in the context of the individual's life history and life world. It is a process that follows the life–course and at the same time creates it (by creating a specific life story). Adults are not simply the recipients of education that comes from the environment, they also (re)define their own lives themselves and create their own personal biographies. Learning includes both the adaptation of the human being to changes in the environment and the formulation of new answers through which individuals influence the context. Biographical learning emphasises a creative attitude towards biography. The human being is, according to Kristensson Uggla (2008), a "*homo capax*" who can reflectively create a biography, develop the ability to shape his or her own reference framework in such a way as to become aware of routines (mental, emotional, action–based) and recognise them as a series of actions that are "produced" in a specific cultural environment.

The human being has multiple possibilities in life and these "unlived lives" (Alheit and Dausein 2000) carry with them the potential to change the routines and structure in which the individual lives. A biography is not only the result of what is lived or experienced, it is not simply trapped in structure, it is also a product of the formation of meanings. We understand biographical learning as a process of autopoiesis, as a process of creating our own biography using given biological characteristics. This means that what is learnt is always temporary and is constantly developing. Learning is not just the acceptance of the already known (transfer and storage), it is the creation of our own consciousness (Noë 2010) and our own life story. The life world is not given, it is achieved. The human being/actor creates his or her own life world through his capacity for agency, aware that the mind is formed in a cultural environment (cf. Luhrmann 2012). When researching learning in everyday life, we thus cannot separate the process of learning from the environment in which it takes place. Learning and knowledge are not independent of the situations in which they are realised. Rather, the connection of the actor with the situation is the source of the formation of knowledge. The knowledge that is formed is the product of activities, experiences, the active self and memory, and of the culture in

which it develops and where it is used. The concept of biographical learning is connected, in this sense, with the concept of autobiographical memory (McAdams and Adler 2010), which interprets narrative identity as the structure of a story with which the human being has an active relationship.

Biographical learning in transitions

Biographical learning as a process of forming behaviour/knowledge and identity appears more clearly in processes of *transition* (Wildemeersch and Stroobants 2009, Hallqvist 2012). We understand a *transition* as a discontinuity in a person's life that causes a reorganisation of meanings, as a result of which the individual has to carry out a revision of meanings in a learning process. Every individual formulates cognitive schemata and categories through which he or she understands the world and regulates the input of information into his or her mental world. The cognitive anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann (2012) states that people regulate a chaotic environment in different ways. During a time of transition a person experiences a feeling of confusion which needs to be regulated. During this process the individual is faced with an intensive and continuous process involving the formulation of a network of meanings, decisions, responsibilities and changes in the personal and social context. The individual's life world or reference framework is faced with disjunctures in his or her biography that are not self–evident. Since the individual's biographical repertoire of knowledge, skills and interpretations is insufficient to allow the automatic management of the situation in transition, he or she must seek or create new knowledge, new interpretations and new modes of action. This means forming new connections between meanings and developing new life practices. When talking about biographical learning in transitions we frequently use the expression "transitional learning" (Wildemeersch and Stroobants 2009). The fact that it has a special name in itself indicates a recognition of the importance and intensity of learning. Learning is not a process that takes place in the same way for all people. In every situation the human being can preserve his or her meanings, fail to adapt cognitive schemata to new conditions, fail to develop new symbolic networks. Jarvis (2006) calls this "non–learning".

One of the important environments in which transitional learning takes place is the *family*. The emotional and value environment of the family has a profound influence on the individual's identity and the formation of knowledge, not only in childhood but also in adulthood and old age (cf.

Slepoj 1998, Dirkx 2008). In family learning, the connection between experiences, memory and learning is clearly expressed. Everything we know about family life – frequently knowledge at the level of myths which, in most cases, is tacit knowledge, where we do not realise that we are acting in accordance with it – is drawn from the past, but we use it in the present. In family practices that are supposed to serve people's modern needs, we act with knowledge that was formulated for more stable conditions in a so–called patriarchal society. In one of the narratives I learnt the story of a family who were preparing a house for their daughter, who was studying medicine – something that was a source of pride in the family. The whole family invested in building the home so that the daughter or granddaughter would have an easier transition to a career and to starting her own family. But the daughter decided to go abroad and continue her professional career in the USA. All the efforts, hopes and expectations of the family members who had built the house were now transferred into looking for cheap plane tickets to go and visit the daughter in the big American city where she lived. The members of this family adapted rapidly in their schemata of meanings. Given the rapid changes (e.g. in the form of the family, in relations within the family, in the organisation of time, in career transitions, etc.) that take place in family systems (cf. Chambers 2012, Morgan, 2013), family members are faced with the need to modify their knowledge and formulate new knowledge. Learning takes place in modern families *as a reflective practice*. Reflective learning, as defined by S. Brookfield (in Mezirow and Taylor 2009), and reflective practice are based on the relationship of the subject with his or her own life world and practices and are dependent on the individual's relationship with the cultural context. When family members develop reflective practice, they think about their actions and critically evaluate their knowledge, personal theories and actions from different points of view in order to be able to modify their goals and the beliefs that guide their practice.

Morgan (2012) deliberately uses the term "family practice" in order to characterise fluidity of events, change, multiplicity of forms and activity. The combination of family practice and reflective practice creates a new view of family life as cyclical learning. Over the last 30 years reflective practice has established itself as a key concept in professional development (Korthagen and Vasalos 2008) and as part of workplace learning. We can also transfer it to the sphere of family learning. As a model for reflective learning we can use the core reflection model (ibid.), in which we consider practices in terms of behaviour, beliefs and values. In family reflective practice which we consider in the context of

biographical learning, we understand our own experience as a text/ narration that needs to be edited. The human being, as actor, accesses an experience in a hermeneutic dialogue and arranges it from confusion into a coherent narrative. He or she considers again how wishes and needs are embedded in the cultural environment, how they have developed, how they operate. Reflective practice thus changes, via reflective narration (Kristensson Uggla 2008), into reflective identity work (Hallqvist 2012).

Learning in periods of family transitions and the effect of the changing family

Changes in the individual at times of transition is nothing new. Various authors write about transitions as a time of transformation/learning. Jung (2005) describes the symbols of transformation in his fundamental work. Van Gennep and then Turner (2009) also use the concept of liminality to indicate the field of learning in periods of transition. Empirical research into learning in transitions began to grow in connection with the stages of development of the individual in development psychology, in migration studies and in the study of transitions in the working environment (cf. Rogoff 2008). Less attention has been paid to biographical learning and family transitions.

The research on the basis of which this article has been written is focused on family transitions, which in the present day differ from the culturally known transitions of the past, with the result that people cannot use the routines of transitions. When studying biographical learning we have to take into account the cultural environment. We need to consider changes in family life in so–called Western culture, in which we understand the family as a relatively rapidly changing group that exists in various ways and itself forms the rules of its own functioning. The boundary between learning and every day activity has been blurred because the life–courses of modern families are unclear and unpredictable and relationships are not placed in traditional (predictable) divisions of work and property. Because family members cannot repeat the routines of the past, learning in the family is frequently an innovative practice or a reflective practice which, using known models and own experiences, creates new models of living together. This presupposes the ability of all members of the family to change rules and meanings in their own microculture. When old patterns are repeated – for example in extreme situations when the family puts the health of its children "in God's hands" and does not make use of knowledge of medicine – many frictions and conflicts arise, with the environment and also in the family. Even at first

glance this example seems outdated, but families do not make many small shifts away from outdated patterns, because they do not even consider the need for change, even though changes would mean a better quality of life for them. Changes, particularly new practices, do not occur overnight, as is also demonstrated by statistics regarding the division of household chores. When a new household is formed, either as a result of marriage or cohabitation, women do more housework than they did previously, when they were single, while men do less (Chambers 2012, 56). This can be a source of dissatisfaction because housework is unevenly distributed in families where both partners are in employment.

Learning in the transition to parenthood

The experience of a life transition is constructed as part of a life story. The narrators included in the study create a coherent narrative which conforms to their reference framework, meaning that every story is a case unto itself. In order to describe the transition to parenthood, I have selected three stories, to which I have given titles taken from sentences from the narratives.

> (1) I'm loving it! I didn't know it would be so cool!
> (2) I'm up for doing it again!
> (3) Before having a baby I'd never noticed that pornography is on the shelves next to newspapers and that children can see it!

The first sentence comes from the narrative of a mother who had a baby daughter after completing a doctorate. She and her partner are both in their 30s and they got ready for the birth of the child with a mixture of doubts and fear about what this would mean for them, since for years they had been living according to the DINKY model (double income, no kids yet). After the first difficulties following the birth, they realised that they were enjoying being parents and that they had not previously been able to imagine this.

The second sentence comes from a story involving a difficult process of assisted conception and a lot of pain and disappointment that was eventually transformed into satisfaction and the desire for another child "so that M. can have a little brother".

The third sentence comes from the narrative of a mother who has become socially critical in the transition to parenthood and begun to notice what is going on around her and what provision is made for children. She

is not only concerned about her own child, but about children in general. Her partner, the father of her child, is around 20 years older than her.

Biographical learning in the transition to parenthood takes place in social circumstances characterised by a fall in the number of children and an increase in the average age of women at first childbirth (story 1). The demographic changes connected to a low birthrate are discussed in the theory of second demographic transition (STD) introduced by Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa (Kaa 2002). The authors explain how in the 1960s industrialised countries reached a new level of demographic development based on individual control of reproductive possibilities with the help of contraception. A low birthrate does not mean, however, that children are less important to their parents. On the contrary, modern parenthood is revealed as responsible parenthood, which also leads to planned learning on embarking on the role of parents, e.g. perinatal education. All three narrators attended perinatal courses, read lots of books and monitored forums. One of them also had sessions with a doula (story 3). A lot of learning appears at the level of the acquisition of knowledge. As well as the fact that partners have fewer children and become parents later, the modern age is also characterised by the fact that being partners and being parents are not necessarily connected. The role of the partner in relationship A is its own source of learning, and the role of the parent in relationship B is its own source of learning (story 3). An increasing number of children are born to unmarried couples or live in reconstructed families. In these cases the parents (partners) already have one experience of a partnership which probably contained experience of love and experience of separation, i.e grief and pain. The same relationship was a source of learning–from–love and learning–from–grief.

Another characteristic of the transition to parenthood is the choice of the time of transition. Most modern pregnancies or adoptions are planned/chosen events. All three of our narrators chose when to have children. Desired and planned children represent a "revolution" in parenting (Gauchet 2010) and in some family stories they also represent the possibility of "sacralisation" of the child and an upbringing that produces "little tyrants" (Ukmar 2012) or leads to the development of a paranoid parenting style (Furedi 2012). Chosen parenthood points to different needs for knowledge and reflective practice in families. For centuries children were born without any possibility of this being planned, as it is today. The fact that two partners decide whether and when to have children is a new development that demands new learning. Deciding about any child has a wide sphere of effects, since on the one hand the partners decide when to have children, and on the other it is the partners who

decide how to have children. This is a question that concerns, in particular, couples who are faced with infertility (story 2). We are witnessing an expectation that all desired children should be born (cf. Saraceno 2001). There is never any suggestion that the desired child perhaps will not be born. We heard, in the narrative, that at first there were two embryos in the womb, and then one "withered". The narrator used the word "embryo" and the verb "wither" (a word normally used for plants: plant shoots wither; people die). There was no suggestion of doubt about the problem of the precariousness of another life, because it was important that the parents' desire for their own child should be realised. Some couples want their own child no matter how much effort they will have to invest in this (story 2). These situations represent a field of experiential learning that begins with the discovery of one's own infertility, after which the partners must face a grieving process: the body is sterile (barren). This is followed by planning of the solution, with the various possibilities of *in vitro* fertilisation or adoption. On this basis a new identity is built. Experiencing one's self and one's own body, confronting infertility and the decision to, for example, adopt a child is connected to and influences self–awareness and so–called self–regulatory knowledge. Other kinds of knowledge – factual knowledge, knowledge of procedures, forms, drugs, etc. – are also accumulated when undergoing fertility treatment or adoption procedures. This kind of transition to parenthood differs from becoming pregnant, which is the consequence of sexual relations and is inscribed in the collective imagination as the natural course of the transition to parenthood. In addition to accepting a different practice of pregnancy, a form of transformative learning, by which meanings deriving from collective knowledge (cultural meanings) are transformed, is also necessary. New social relations, new kinship relationships (e.g. the use of a surrogate mother) are emerging which were not previously known and which partners create through innovative learning. If innovative transformative learning does not occur, a feeling of guilt develops (sometimes in connection with the social stigma of infertility). There is still relatively little said or written about assisted conception procedures and related patterns of behaviour, feelings and relationships. As a result, parents are autonomous or, rather, isolated learners when it comes to forming their own values and practices.

   In the past childbirth was a risky business for both mother and baby. People accepted the risk. Modern risks (with assisted conception, surrogate mothers, etc.) are different. Risk is to a greater extent an integral part of partners' decisions and is connected to learning. Risk is not only accepted when circumstances are unknown (infections during childbirth

and other risks in the past), risk is included in the decision to form a new practice. This includes a willingness to adopt entirely new models of behaviour. A risk which is now a decision and not simply resignation (passive acceptance and learning as adaptation to powerlessness) implies a different starting point in relation to the child and the way it is brought up. A planned child can be part of (exaggerated) expectations which he or she is supposed to fulfil. Parents' expectations in relation to children can be (too) great. An extremely emotionally charged relationship can develop, in which there is a great deal of renunciation (and also suffering). An interesting phenomenon here is the mother's feeling that she is morally responsible for putting her own needs after those of the child. In one narrative (story 3) we heard that

> "it is normal that she spends a lot of time on the baby", that "she simply can't imagine going skiing [although she would like to – author's note] and leaving the child with her mother". "I tried to once, but I couldn't stop thinking what terrible mother I was, enjoying myself while the baby was with his grandmother."

In this case learning took place at the level of internalising guilt, which is attributed to modern mothers if they put their own wishes ahead of their child's (assumed) comfort.

The next characteristic that defines biographical learning in the transition to parenthood is the transformation of gender roles. This relates to altered expectations regarding the roles of the father and the mother. In the past, the birth and everything connected with the birth was the responsibility of the woman (cf. Rožman 2004). Even infanticides were a woman's business. Once the child was born, looking after the children was also the woman's domain. Things are different today. *Fathers* get involved in the preparations for the birth (attending schools for future parents), they are present at the birth, and then they play a part in childcare and child rearing. Such behaviour is also connected with the woman's role in the world of work, employment and professional success. A new role is developing for fathers, that of the "new nurturant father" (Schwalb Schwalb and Lamb 2013, Rener et al. 2008), a role which partners do not know from past models and which they shape themselves without having images for it in the past. The need for a capacity to create one's own role rather than simply adopt models from the past is becoming apparent. In all three of our stories, the role of the father appeared as the role of a modern father, who looks after the child even before it is born (preparation for the birth, change of diet together with partner, present at the birth, sees to the

needs of wife/partner and the baby following the birth, for example taking turns to sleep next to the baby so that the mother can rest too (story 1)).

The mothers say (stories 1, 2, 3) that in this transition they recognise in themselves many capacities which they had not expected to be able to develop. Quite a number of these relate to the relationship between parents and mothers–in–law. Learning in the transition to parenthood is, according to our empirical data, (also) three–generational learning. The child connects the different generations of a family. It connects both sets of parents and also the daughter–in–law and mother–in–law. The child is "competent" in this linking role from birth onwards, our narrators tell us, although this is not true in every case. Sometimes the child can increase conflicts (cf. Rijavec Klobučar 2011). How people regulate relationships is to a large extent dependent on their knowledge and capacity for regulating relationships. Managing relationships therefore requires knowledge based on experiential knowledge and reflective learning. This can be a challenge for creative practice, to have all three generations learn (discover) something new about relationships and create them and begin working together in small everyday events or everyday practices. The birth of a child is also interesting because the two sets of grandparents begin to keep company with each other (story 1). In some cultures socialising between the two sets of parents is customary even before marriage (for example in the case of Muslims in Bosnia, as researched by Keith Doubt 2013), although this is not the case in Slovenia. Connections frequently begin to form when grandchildren are involved. The two grandmothers, for example, will talk on the phone about their granddaughter and create new mutual connections and also new knowledge, for example about using a computer (to send photographs of the granddaughter (story 1)).

The family cultural context influences the acceptance and shaping of roles with its own scripts (expected roles) and is, to a large extent, an emotional and relational field of learning and activity. Functions and related learning in the transition relate to three relationships:

(a) with the child,
(b) with the partner,
(c) with the extended family.
All three relationships appear in the narratives in all four categories
of experience (love, action, play and loss).

In the first (parental) relationship it is necessary to develop the mental models and actions of parenting (taking responsibility, guiding the

children's upbringing, regulation of emotions, time and space management, creation of new routines).

In the second (conjugal) relationship there is a need for a legitimation of the reciprocity of the roles father/mother in connection with the roles husband/wife and parent/partner. If the partner relationship is not also a parental relationship in respect of a shared child, new knowledge is necessary which requires a different creation of customs, positions and practices than if the dyad man/woman is also the dyad father/mother. Since we draw knowledge about family relationships from our experiences in our original families, it is necessary in this transition to consider the relationships of attachment and how we re–generate them. This is something that also points to the third relationship.

The third relationship includes intergenerationality and relationships between adult siblings (relationships in the vertically and horizontally extended family). The transition is not limited to the (new) nuclear family, it also includes grandparents and other individuals/elements of the extended family. The question of how to manage mutual relations and delimit the space of family systems and subsystems therefore always arises. None of these elements are part of routines. Instead they emerge in new networks of relationships, and learning is not simple because adaptation and repetition do not prove effective.

Learning in an intergenerational relationship can take place in two directions. The first involves a rupture. This means that the new parents break with their own family story and do not continue the system of values and practices. In extreme cases this can mean a lack of intergenerational transfer and depriving children of knowledge that would otherwise come from their grandparents. The other direction is repetition, which occurs when the new parents are unable to separate from their original stories and repeat models of partner and parental relationships. There are no pure oppositions in life. True stories are somewhere in between, or are either more inclined to rupture or to continuation.

Learning in the family transition of children leaving home

In modern developed societies to transition to adulthood is becoming a long period that includes post–adolescence and the young adult period (Bjorklund 2011) and can last to the age of 30 or sometimes, in situations of financial crisis, even longer. As a result, the transition of parents to the post–parental period is a relatively long one. In order to consider learning in the transition when children leave home, I selected three stories to which I gave titles taken from sentences in the narratives.

(4) *At last a room of my own!*
(5) *I'm getting to know the housing market! What dumps people try to sell!*
(6) *I don't interfere in their business…*

The fourth story is about the relief that a mother feels when she sends her children "out into the world" and can start to organise her own time and space creatively in her own way. The idea of a room of one's own is borrowed from Virginia Woolf and was used to describe the opportunity to start to create a new career. In this narrative the career was in the field of voluntary work and involved organising events. The transition gave the narrator the opportunity to start training as an events manager. If her children had not left home and if she had not "let go" of the role of mother, she probably would not have embarked on her second career. The new field fills her with enthusiasm and as a result she is much more open, in her relationship with her children, to new activities and ways of connecting.

The fifth story is about buying a flat for one's children. Interestingly, buying property features in all of the narratives (1 to 6) as one of the frequent practices in transitions. This can be related to prolonged dependence (parents bind their children into relationships of dependence), although the aspect that stands out most clearly in these narratives is the desire to give their children something. In development psychology this period is known as the period when adults turn to others, when they wish to contribute to others and share with others (see Demetrio 2003). Buying a flat for one's children means easing their path into adulthood and an independent life. An interactive process develops, involving buying and learning about buying. The narrator (5) took out a loan "so I'm learning to get by with not much money and I already know what it will be like when I'm living on my pension."

The sixth narrative is the story of a daughter who had already moved out but then returned home after separating from her partner. She now lives with her daughter in a flat in her parents' house. The narrator was extremely sad as she told her story, above all because of the violence which caused her daughter to leave her partner. "I still can't get used to it... I can't accept it, but I pretend everything is all right..."

Young adults still live with their parents but they organise their lives differently. A common humorous portrayal of young adults in Slovenia involves a model of shared household known as "Hotel Mama" which is characteristic of Mediterranean countries. This is a form of shared household in which the parents provide board and lodging and the young adults freely organise their own time and obligations. In specialist literature this model is referred to as the Mediterranean model (extended

period of living in a shared household). In this model children only physically leave the family (the home of their primary family) when they start their own family (story 4). More typical in northern European countries is a transition model where children leave their original family even if they do not have their own family yet. As well as sociological models that talk about typical transitions/models (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005), individual characteristics are important. Ule (2008) claims that transitions to adulthood are also *increasingly individualised*, and therefore different types of counselling and mentoring are also developing (Young et al. 2010). Each of the models, each individual environment and the relationships between individuals imply different forms of family learning.

In addition to the fact that transitions are individualised, they are typically also *reversible*, as illustrated by story 6. In the past, the transition was relatively rapid and in most cases irreversible. It was linked to employment and marriage. When children left home, they did not return, because jobs were more stable in comparison to the present precariousness of work. Modern transitions are characterised by reversibility and experimentation, which means that creative learning about relationships, managing finances and organising space and time is always present, even when adult children return to the home of their primary family following a separation. Routine relationships taken from the past are not possible, because such positions were not known in the past.

The *identity of parents* in late middle age is also changing more slowly and in different ways than in the past. Parents are entering a new period which is still relatively healthy and vital, and can start new activities, and sometimes a second career (story 4), because they have more time available for themselves (cf. Bjorklund 2011). For children leaving home and for parents embarking on a phase without children (the post–parental phase), the transition is a period of development/learning. With increasing life expectancies, we are also seeing the emergence of new forms of three–generation families consisting of three adult groups: adult children, their parents and their aged grandparents. All three groups are usually rather loosely connected and are "testing" new roles. In this period the family no longer includes (and does not yet include) the function of bringing up children and all members encounter each other as subsystems of equal adults.

The "empty nest" transition is a learning workshop for *differentiation between the generations*. This period sees the formation of meanings and practices of living together for two adult groups. The learning relates to new information, new ways of feeling and thinking, new practices based on the autonomy of both (or all three) generations. Autonomy does not

mean here that each individual lives (or can live) separately from the others but that they decide what kind of connections they will live in, and can reconsider their systems of attachment. Freedom of decision is to a large extent also connected to employment and material status (e.g. the possibility of having one's own home, something of which the narrator in story 5 is aware). If young adults are unemployed, the relationship and related learning that develop are different from those that develop if there are three generations of adults in the family, each with its own income.

Each transition is characterised by the *loss of something and the acquisition of something new*. Feelings of sadness (loss causes grief) and hope (the expectation of the new) appear. If they only experience the transition as the loss of something they had (the role of parent), more sadness than hope will be present and it can happen that they will be unable to let go of what they had because they do not see an opportunity for something new. They will not "allow" their children to leave home because they want to hang on to the role of parents. If they experience the transition as a period of loss but simultaneously of expectation, there is more openness to learning.

Hope is a feeling that favours learning and derives from the expectation of several decades of life after the transition; it may be connected to a new career (such as employment or voluntary work) or to new social networks, new partnerships, etc. The formation of new forms of the family can lead to connections and new social networks or to new forms of solitude as a new lifestyle (Hyrigoyen 2009). Separations of partners after adult children leave home are frequent. These can be followed by a period of solitude sometimes by the establishment of new families and the birth of children with other partners. Transitional learning can include formation of the identity of a father and, simultaneously, a grandfather (story 3). Connections between generations in this period can mean various models of the transfer of knowledge (Kump and Jelenc Krašovec 2013), the preservation of symbolic systems of connections (preservation of narratives, gift–giving, customs at festivities) or a redefining of the goals of the partner relationship and a renewed investment in the partner relationship (narrative 2). All these paths imply dialogue and dialogue–based learning between generations and between genders. The content and methods of learning are individualised with regard to the individual family.

In modern families in "Western" culture, more obligations and housework still fall to mothers during the child rearing period – despite the greater involvement of fathers (Chambers 2012). When the children grow up and leave home, a new set of relations develops between the partners.

With the removal of the children from the original family, a new space opens up for the parents' own development, which in this period also includes the formation of a different physical identity (facing ageing, illness, etc.). A woman who feels emptiness after the end of the period dedicated to raising children can experience this emptiness as a new opportunity. She experiences it as the *opportunity to have a room of her own*, to use the words of one of our narrators (story 4). The family system does not necessarily have to pass directly from one type of care (for its own children) to another type of care (grandchildren).

Important elements for research into family learning and an experimental taxonomy of family learning

We understand family learning as a process that takes place in all phases of the family life–course, where it is more intensive in some phases and less intensive in others. Researching family learning is complex because it is difficult to research private (intimate) life (Gabb 2010, Chibucos and Leite 2005). However, from observation of practice and monitoring narratives on practice, we can conclude (at least on an experimental basis) what areas of learning stand out. These are: relationships and communication, support and supervision, decision–making and "emotional management" or affective strategies, conflicts, cohesiveness of the group or dyad and attachment, diet, finances. Knowledge emerges about all of this with the addition of information and modification of existing knowledge. The generativity or fertility of a family is not only apparent at the level of biological reproduction and the generation of economic activity (creation of a home and sometimes a business), the family is also fertile at the symbolic level.

From the findings, I have drawn up a taxonomy of family learning. In the table below I have classified some results of learning in terms of the existential themes that represent the taxonomic groups, and in terms of types of knowledge. The table shows just a few selected examples of the results of learning as told to me by the narrators in the empirical part of the research.

Table 5–1 Taxonomy of family learning in terms of existential themes and types of knowledge / Taxonomic groups, Result of learning (accumulation and transformation)

Existential themes as "Laboratories of Learning"	Declarative knowledge (modified or added knowledge, knowledge of something)	Procedural knowledge (modified or developed new practices)	Self–regulatory knowledge (knowledge of self and formation of identity)
Love experiences (commitment, creation, enthusiasm)	Knowing what childbirth involves/knowing how childbirth went. Knowing how to resolve a conflict with a partner (use of self–help manual).	Changes in sexual relationship (after childbirth and with ageing). Participation in celebrations of the extended family.	Knowledge of self in relation to partner or child, and development of attitude to self as partner or parent. Dealing with "transcendent" love for one's child.
Action experiences (routines, work, effort)	Learning new recipes for healthy eating. Learning about religious ceremonies (baptism).	Shopping and cooking with regard to the child's needs (baby).	Recognising oneself as an efficient time manager.
Play experiences (aimless activity; aimless enquiry, "idleness" – cf. Koch 2013).	Getting to know new picture books, authors, illustrators. Getting to know amusement parks.	Treating the symbolic (stories in the family) as important: ability to narrate family myths in a new way.	Discovery of the playful self (*homo ludens*) and development of the imagination. Giving oneself time for idleness and allowing this.
Grief experiences (slowness to accept loss)	Finding out about adoption legislation. Finding out about medical procedures for assisted conception.	Creating new ways to spend free time once the children have gone.	Accepting that one's body is incapable of giving birth. Altered physical identity. Not always being defensive in conflict situations.

Source: the author.

In addition to the above division of learning in terms of existential themes, we could also develop a taxonomy in terms of relationships and meanings. Taking into account the fact that in the modern age the family is above all a relational and emotional community and to a lesser extent a productive–economic community, we can identify two focuses of research into learning that appear to be dominant (including in the narratives), namely:

- learning regarding relationships (power in relationships, emotional connections); and
- learning regarding the symbolic structure (norms, values).

Reflective learning (unlike learning from repetition and adaptation) occurs if the symbolic axis (norms, values) enables the relational axis (power in relationships, emotional connections) to change. Positive emotions are connected with the feeling of success (cf. Robertson 2012) and, in the case of learning, with love and trust/hope, while negative emotions are connected with hostility and hopelessness.

Learning regarding relationships (relational axis) shows us what relationships occur and how they affect the formation of knowledge and identity, what relationships are strongest, and how subsystems and connections between these subsystems form in the family. The relational matrix is also determined by the emotional field in the family and this points to the development of learning about self–management of emotions, learning about relational dynamics, addressing complex relational problems, etc.

Learning regarding symbolic structure or the symbolic axis points to the structure of meanings and the formation of categories that determine familiality in an individual family and the wider culture. The symbolic axis represents the foundation of "cultural capital" in an individual family, because it relates to ethics and values. In everyday life this appears as the answer to the question: What is right in the family? (for example: Is it right that the children's needs take precedence over the needs of the mother?). An important part of the symbolic matrix is responsibility, which develops through relationships and events and a system of meanings. The symbolic matrix is created by family stories, and the symbolic field of family stories is multigenerational. Narratives are transferred across several generations and the effects can be different (Formenti and Gamelli 1998). If we use stories to transfer "solid truths" and, with them, rigidity, these can be restrictions in the creation of identity and a relational network, because they are prevented by family myths.

This means that the role of the family does not only lie in organising current real relationships and experiences, but also in explaining relationships and connections which are part of family stories, and above all myths. Family myths can be explicit or hidden. An example of the latter category are stories about suicides, which until recently were not spoken about in families.

Learning in a transition is also a dialogue between present and past. It occurs in relationships that are real (dialogue between living generations) and in relationships that are narrative in nature (the messages of previous generations).

Conclusion

Learning is a complex process which, in postmodern fragmentation and modification, is an integral part of all practices. Bergson (1998) writes that for the conscious being, "being" means changing and creating itself. This is also how learning is understood by the authors of the theory of biographical learning. Learning is a fundamental process of humanity (Tennan, 2012, Jarvis 2006), it is present throughout the existential process through which the individual creates his or her life story.

In researching family learning as biographical learning, which we have highlighted in this article using the example of learning in two transitions, we have paid attention to various types of results and classified them in a taxonomy of family learning. For biographical learning, reflectivity, circularity and formativity are important in all environments. Reflectivity is the ability to reflect on one's own experiences and create knowledge which is then connected into a system of knowledge, and to develop one's own practices with the help of reflection on experiences. Reflectivity in the learning process takes the form of a dialogue with the self or with another, through which the individual observes his or her own practices in order not to repeat mistakes and in order to establish, a posteriori, the implicit rules and myths that are latent in relational and symbolic systems. Also important in family learning is the idea of circularity, which represents the acceptance of the interconnection of processes in relational and symbolic matrices. Family systems have their own history, which means that present practices and narratives are interwoven with those of the past. Every activity is the consequence of multiple causes and the interactions between them, and clear linear effects cannot be traced. For this reason, narrative methods and other ethnographic techniques are a suitable route to an understanding of family learning as biographical learning.

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Chapter Six

Non–Formal and Informal Learning in the Community:
A Case Study in the Northern Algarve (Portugal)[1]

António Fragoso

Abstract

In this chapter we analyse educational and development processes from deprived communities in southern Portugal. The theoretical inspiration for the action combined participatory research frameworks and community development theory. These processes were based on non–formal and informal learning, allowing a reflection on its consequences and importance for the people of the community.

Keywords: non–formal learning, informal learning, community education, lifelong education, action research.

Introduction

Some years ago I studied the community development processes that occurred between 1985 and 2003 in a mountainous area of the Algarve region called Cachopo – roughly similar to many other communities in inland Portugal. In the mid–1980s these were very deprived communities that had experienced the shocks of modernisation (since the late 1950s) without any visible success. The decay of the traditional rural modes of living; the almost total stagnation of local economy; severe problems in infrastructure and basic services to population, such as public health care;

difficult access to social security; high illiteracy rates and a low level of education/qualifications among the population; very traditional gender roles (among other factors that caused women to be strongly excluded); the absence of collective structures (such as associations) that could eventually promote citizen action – all these factors contributed to massive migration of the active population and a consequent ageing of the population. The net results were that communities had lost, over time, their ability to promote social change spontaneously. People had chosen, as the main task of their lives, to provide formal education for their children in the hope they would leave the region permanently to look for jobs and a life elsewhere.

In the early 1980s a national plan aimed mainly at reducing illiteracy (but which also included, among other dimensions, support for popular education or the implementation of regional development plans) was developed and ran for a period of five years (DGEP 1979). Structural conditions, including the political and social instability typical of the post–revolutionary period, little funding and a lack of resources caused this plan to be a failure in most dimensions. Nevertheless, it did give rise to new theories and forms of social intervention (Nogueira 1996). The existence of a "capital of knowledge, experiences and ideas, capable of promoting the integrated and autonomous development of an educational field" was demonstrated (Lima 1996, 68). A set of local development approaches were tested and a space was opened up that would later see communities being selected as a focus for action. Portugal's entry to the EEC in 1986 gave civil society organisations access to European funding for work in the community with little control by the state. Programmes like LEADER, NOW and EQUAL led to a proliferation of experiences in communities which, in a significant number of cases, used action research methods (Silva 1996) and popular education (Fragoso 2011) to reach their goals – basically, to increase the quality of life of deprived communities and groups.

In the Algarve region (southern Portugal) two important events took place. The first was a direct consequence of the national plan mentioned above, in the form of the implementation of an integrated plan for regional development. Based around a network of adult educators and young people from the communities – who were provided with (superficial) "Freirian training" (see, e.g. Freire 1987) – it began offering a significant number of literacy courses throughout the region. Then the local administration, in cooperation with adult educators, created a number of activities ranging from social and cultural education to community education and development actions (Arco and Fragoso 2010). It is not the

intention here to evaluate this plan, which continued to run for some years, but merely to stress that one effect of the plan was to leave in the field an interesting network of adult educators and other social actors who had begun to understand that change was possible. The second important event occurred in 1985, when a small group of individuals created the Radial project.[2] The first phase of this project involved cooperation with those social actors who were already active in the area, and with the departing team from the regional development plan, in order to start a social intervention with the communities in the northern part of the Algarve region. After three years this project had proved so successful that a new stronger association was created (In Loco) to substitute Radial, but maintaining the project philosophy and its methods of action methods. These were the pillars of the community processes that took place in Cachopo,[3] which I will be describing next and which constitute the basis of the subsequent reflections on non–formal and informal learning.

Educational processes in Cachopo: the bases

The action in Cachopo started when a former immigrant who had returned from Germany was elected president of the local administration and, hearing that "something" was being done in communities close to Cachopo, asked the Radial team to consider the possibility of including "his" communities in the project. Radial had previously secured funding from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation – on condition that the project included educational work with children – and so organised a community forum titled "the future of our children" in Cachopo (in October 1985). At that meeting people discussed some of the problems that affected their everyday lives and a few general issues emerged: the community's problems were many and diverse in nature; there were no organised groups in the community; but there was a considerable will to do something about it.

The community forum was therefore the trigger for an informal group of people to gather with the Radial team and start to act in order to solve some of the problems facing children: children from isolated rural districts had to catch buses to school as early as six in the morning; and then had to

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[2] RADIAL: Support Network for the Integrated Development of the Algarve Region

[3] Cachopo was only one of the places where serious attempts were made to work with populations in a community development strategy based on popular education. The action of Radial covered also Azinhal, Alte and Martinlongo. Later on there were interesting experiences in other zones of the Algarve.

wait hours after school was over to get back to their homes; there were no nursery schools so that children entered primary school directly (at the age of six), thus affecting their mothers' chances of being able to find employment; and finally the primary school served no meals. The group had the idea of setting up an educational centre that could serve both as a nursery school and as an activity centre for older children, but that raised two additional issues: the construction of a new centre would be expensive and would take too long; and there were no trained educators in the community. Radial was aware that some fast results were necessary in order to sustain community participation. They therefore encouraged informal groups to search for available spaces in the community where a provisional centre could be established, along with materials, equipment and so on. At the same time, Radial started to design an in–service training programme for local educators willing to do the job; the problem of the new centre would be dealt with later.

This first challenge proved that people from the community had to learn both the value of organisation and the obstacles facing the process; but this could only be done if a collective dynamic was generated and the community had the power to decide together with the Radial team. Thus it was necessary to support the emergence of local collective structures – and more or less one year after the action started, a community association was created. Action in the community now had three main focuses: social and educational work with children; support for local collective structures to in order to enrich the fabric of the local community; and finally, fostering economic activity through training and by encouraging self–employment, taking into account the fact that women should be the natural target of this type of action. In this last dimension, Radial and, later, In Loco took advantage of an official Portuguese programme to fund two–year training courses with the following features (In Loco 2001): a focus on activities considered to be of cultural interest (a mandatory component under the funding programme); the training would be intensive (8 hours a day, five days a week) and trainees would receive minimum wage; besides regular expenses, the programme would also pay for field or business trips or travel to places to disseminate products; finally, after the two–year course was completed, people would submit a proposal for the creation of a micro–enterprise which, if approved, would grant members a subsidy to start their own business.

Two of these courses were organised for women in Cachopo, but the Radial team made some additional changes to the educational and training processes (Fragoso 2009): first, the women would channel 30% of their salaries into a common bank account that would allow them to make some

investments and begin to produce earlier; secondly, there was no separation of theory and practice: learning was planned according to the daily needs of the workshop and production. This meant, for example, learning about bookkeeping, because the women had to do the workshop accounts; learning about graphic design, in order to be able to create new hand–woven products adapted to modern tastes (including mixing traditional elements with modern functionality and aesthetics); English to deal with foreign customers, and so on. The trainers selected by the In Loco team came from the Algarve region in some cases, but also from a prestigious arts school of Lisbon.

The structure of the training course meant that in the second year of training there were already two women's workshops producing products, going to fairs or exhibition/marketing events to show their products and attract customers, and so on. For the women, these trips were fundamental, not only because of their importance for the success of their businesses, but also because they gave them the chance to leave their village, meet other people and, above all, to change their own situation with respect to their family and community. As might be expected, families and the community reacted negatively to the new situation of these two groups of women, who no longer had time to take care of all the needs of their children, cook meals for the family, etc. while simultaneously doing a full–time job. Men had to adjust, but in fact it took years of criticism and problems before the community recognised the women's efforts as positive. One of these micro–enterprises only remained open for three years, but the second one (Lançadeira) provided a job for women for twenty years (1986–2006).

The informal community group responsible for children's issues managed, in the space of just eight months, to open the Cachopo preschool centre in provisional premises and to start working with nine children aged 3–6 and 68 children aged 6–14 (Radial 1986). As the head of the Radial team was by that time working at the University of the Algarve, the in–service action research training programme was designed as a joint programme between the two institutions.[4] Let us look briefly at how the programme worked (Fragoso 2005a and 2005b): on Mondays the participants[5] had concentrated theoretical training at the university (so the

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[4] Other institutions were involved from time to time, for example the School of Education of the University of Lisbon, or the Early Childhood Education Centre of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

[5] Preschool centres were promoted not only in Cachopo but also in three other locations in the region. The programme therefore included about 20 young adults/adults from those four communities.

centres had to close). On other days trainers and teachers came to Cachopo, observed the day's activities and had regular supervising meetings with educators at the end of the day. The training programme was continuously adjusted both to people's needs and to the local context, in an action research dynamic, so nobody knew exactly how long the programme would last – in the end it lasted for three and a half years. Two central features can be further stressed. The first regards the connection with local culture, which served as a basis for all educational activities in the centre: local architecture, the environment, traditional knowledge in every dimension of life. This was a difficult battle, since the educators involved in the programme repeatedly claimed that traditional culture was undervalued in the community. They were aware that community support for the centre was crucial and were afraid of losing that support if children were encouraged to participate in something that the community rejected as a desirable future. With time, however, this challenge was definitively overcome and the centre turned out to be an important element in the revival of local culture. The second important feature was a persistent attempt to include all social actors in the centre. The "magic triangle" of family–community–school (in this case primary school) continued to function for years in a significant number of educational actions which successfully articulated formal, non–formal and informal learning (Fragoso 2005a). Decisive in this outcome were the training and effective supervision provided, the small size of the community and the fact that the members of the community knew each other well. Small details that facilitated people gathering were important. For example, the new centre (which opened its doors in 1992[6]) provided meals for students, teachers and educators; and services existing in the centre were freely used by the community (the space was even used for local parties; a fax machine, photocopiers, computers and internet access were also at the community's disposal).

Apart from these two cases, it is important to note that in 1991 a new association, based around the Catholic church, appeared in Cachopo. Their first action was to build a day care centre for the elderly, as older citizens were suffering greatly from isolation and an absence of basic necessities (particularly healthcare). Soon, however, other activities of this group (Fragoso 2009) began to benefit the community as whole. These included literacy courses for the elderly, a library (including films and music that could be borrowed by children and young adults), and a small community

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[6] The funding for the new centre mainly came from the LEADER programme. However, the community also organised a serious of parties and numerous local events to raise money to cover the costs of construction.

internet space. Some years later (2009), a new building that combined the day care centre with a home was built and opened to the community. Although it is not my intention to focus here on the situation of older adults or on learning in this group, these elements are important to understand the community as a whole and to understand the phases and fluctuations of community learning processes over the years.

Community mediation has played a very important role in community learning and development processes. Between 1985 and 1991 the mediation role of the Radial/In Loco teams was crucial at a number of levels: first, to prevent or resolve a number of significant conflicts that were constantly emerging among community members. This was obviously a matter of local power bargaining, but also the expression of the difficulties that a reduced social network brings. In fact, mediation was mostly exerted inside the various groups; collective working is a difficult task when external conditions push people into opposite modes of living. In Loco ceased its direct intervention in the community in 1991 but created a network of mediators who came from the communities themselves and were trained both to continue with the mediation already in place and to act as connecting elements between the people and In Loco. This caused problems precisely because mediation ceased to be effective and local protagonists soon started to emerge – sometimes clashing with each other and threatening what for years had been a collective story. But mediation was also important for the fostering of relations and a collective spirit among the various groups (the preschool centre group; the two women's groups; the new local association; and other informal groups that, although not central to the action, participated in a secondary manner and represented various voices of the community). This is a type of mediation, fundamental in community processes, that aims at collective, strategic social change (Fragoso and Lucio–Villegas 2010). This second type of mediation produced interesting results in this period; but its disappearance over time was one of the factors that allowed a fragmentation between these groups, as will be explained below. Finally, the fact that In Loco ceased its direct action also had the effect of "freeing" local social actors (who had become too dependent on the In Loco team) to create spontaneous activities. Since I believe that these processes have to be understood in a continuum, the events described so far are enough to understand some consequences of the community learning that took place until, roughly, the mid–1990s.

Educational processes in Cachopo: the consequences

The processes of non–formal and informal learning described above produced very interesting results regarding the changing of social gender roles in the community, visible in multiple aspects (Fragoso and Ollagnier 2011). The women's husbands understood after some years that the improvement to the family income was a positive thing and managed to adjust to a new more balanced home–work division. However, the community still showed resistance. Paradoxically or not, it took visitors from outside (people stated to visit Cachopo to look for the products of the micro–enterprises, while the experience itself attracted people from the university and other "intellectual" visitors) and certain improvements in local business to finally change attitudes. Some details might seem unimportant and even ridiculous: for example, the women from these groups were the first to get a driving licence – fundamental to their freedom and the opportunity to socialise beyond the narrow confines of their home village. Little by little it became more "normal" for women to have an economic activity and contribute to the community from a more equal position. And most of these women started to assume a central position in the community, promoting the organisation of further activities – as described next:

In 1995 four women (three of them belonging to the two micro–enterprises that had been opened by then) decided to get together with a group of young adults and constitute a new association with the aim of organising cultural activities. Their first activity was to create a singing group (Seara de Outono; the group still exists today) which was interesting from the ethnological point of view. The women collected old lyrics and melodies, but also typical costumes that had long been used in the area (daily costumes; rural working costumes, etc.); they then asked a professional singer to help them give their music a more modern touch; and they soon began giving performances throughout the region. The singing group was followed by the formation of a dance group (with 25–30 members) which had its roots in traditional dance and enjoyed considerable success with performances around Portugal and also in Spain and France.[7] It is important to note that this would have been an impossible task in the early 1980s, when local culture was inextricably associated with the collapse of the agricultural economy and was therefore

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[7] This dance group was a mixture of adults and young adults, but could only function if numbers were sufficient. Since young adults have continued to leave Cachopo, the group no longer exists.

viewed by the population as something unacceptable. The learning that took place in the first decade of these community processes was fundamental, then, to the reconciliation of people with their own culture. Culture therefore seems – at least in our context – strategically fundamental in community development processes as argued by Melo (2010), while education in the non–formal and informal senses is a crucial instrument for the operation of the necessary changes. This new association also played for some years a very important role in the wider cultural life of the territory, organising public celebrations for local festivities (e.g. Carnival).

A woman from the Lançadeira micro–enterprise had the idea of putting together a regional association with the aim of defending the regional cultural heritage, as produced in everyday life by ordinary people (through handicrafts and so on). The association had its base in the town of Tavira where, in cooperation with the town hall, annual activities are organised in public spaces. A small house in the city was transformed into a small living museum. Over the years this association has given visibility to cultural producers from throughout the Algarve region. The woman from Lançadeira is still the president of the association today.

Two women from Lançadeira have begun to take an active part in politics. Laura[8] ran for president of the smallest administrative district in Portugal in local elections and lost by just twelve votes. In the same elections, her friend Mary was a member of the team that was elected. Four years later Laura tried again but was again unsuccessful. Once again her friend was part of the team. In the last elections (held on 29 September 2013) Laura was finally elected president. It is undeniable that these women have made an incredible journey over the last few decades. In the mid–1980s they were not active in economic terms; they stayed at home taking care of their husbands and children (and sometimes the elderly) and perhaps a small rural property. They had never travelled, or played any kind of important role in their community, or had anything to say regarding decisions that affected their lives. The differences today are significant and it is by no means a coincidence that they have been deeply involved in learning processes defined by structured projects of community development, whose central feature has been to consider adult education central – in all its forms.

Although these changes relating to gender roles seem important in a place like Cachopo, other members of the community also began to organise important activities in the mid–1990s. One of these was a joint

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[8] All the names that appear in the text have been changed to guarantee anonymity.

event organised by a diverse range of groups from the community (hence its fundamental importance): the educators from the preschool centre and the community association behind it; women from the micro–enterprises; members of the association responsible for the day care centre; and other community members who did not belong to any organised group but who were willing to lend a hand. This event was a local crafts fair. Organisation of the fair involved contacting producers in the area (handicrafts makers, honey producers, producers of beverages, weavers, etc.), organising transport and places in which to show and sell the products, organising entertainment (music, dancing, etc.), and so on. The event was a success and soon became the main event of the area in terms of visitor numbers. It is still organised today.

Other activities could be mentioned but there is room to describe them all here. A couple of final issues should nevertheless be highlighted before we advance some conclusions. The first of these issues relates to the specific directions taken by these community processes in the more recent period. Two factors were central in the fragmentation of the community groups, to the point where the existing modes of cooperation were blocked or greatly reduced. The first of these, already mentioned above (Fragoso and Lucio–Villegas 2010), was mediation: in the absence of a planned mediation structure, no one in the community assumed this role explicitly or implicitly. The second factor is conflict (a partial consequence of the lack of mediation), a very important category of analysis in community education. Conflicts between local social actors, which usually imply conflicts between entities, arose more frequently. Local protagonists began to fight for their margins of influence and decision–making; as we tried to show in Fragoso (2009), in small social networks the effects of competition for public space do not accommodate more than a small number of local protagonists, and this kills off modes of cooperation, substituting the individual for the collective.

The second point relates to the specific conditions of the area, which have not improved over time. The ageing of the population, the lack of young adults and the diminishing population of active adults – these are all factors that have intensified in the last decade, and this has had destructive consequences on the recent history of the community. The primary school has closed and children now have to travel long distances to attend school. Some years later even the preschool centre had to close, owing to the absence of children. Lançadeira closed in 2006. The only institution to have got bigger – absorbing a significant proportion of the lost jobs – is the one devoted to caring for the elderly.

The content of this last paragraph seems very frustrating. I would like to stress, however, that the results of community educational processes cannot be measured only by the creation of physical structures or evaluated by the services available to citizens. If we think about the main aims of an educational action with regard to community development, we should consider at least three central features: to improve globally people's quality of life (Nogueiras 1996, Reszsohazy 1998); to strengthen people's abilities, organisation and self–trust (Albino and Leão 1997); and to add value to local resources of different kinds (Ander–Egg 1982). It seems clear that if we analyse community processes over long periods of time, then natural fluctuations both in the history of these communities and in the processes they choose to engage with will become visible. In the rapidly changing world we live in, some of the changes in peripheral regions or countries can appear discouraging when looked at from our subjective point of view. In the case of these specific communities I have been describing – and although there is no room here to construct a consistent argument – it nevertheless seems that important changes have been accomplished in all three dimensions. Finally, since the focus in this text is learning in its non–formal and informal manifestations, there is a very important reflection to be made: what was the educational route that some of these individuals followed after their experiences in the processes described above? Have previous learning experiences had some influence on their present situation?

From the cases above described it is easy to see that it is difficult to find men assuming any kind of central role in the community. The exception is the leader of the Catholic association – but this was mentioned secondarily, and in any case the association was not part of the initial project of community intervention. Apart from this exception, two men headed (in different moments) the community association responsible for running the preschool centre. Since the centre closed, however, they have not been involved in any learning processes. The two (female) educators who used to work at the preschool centre participated, as I mentioned, in the action research training programme that lasted for three and a half years. Some years later they returned to formal learning at the University of the Algarve, enrolling in a two–year preschool education programme, which they concluded successfully (this was a programme of complementary training which did not lead to a formal degree). After the centre was closed, they both found jobs working with the elderly: one of the educators is responsible for occupational activities; the other works as a carer in the day care centre and home.

The four women who used to work at Malhas (the micro–enterprise that only operated for three years) all found jobs at the home/day care centre but, apart from short–term specific training sessions, have never returned to non–formal or formal learning.

The women who worked for a longer period at Lançadeira have followed a more interesting path. In 2003 (when Lançadeira was still operating) four women registered at a centre for recognition of prior learning, where they were certified at 9th grade level. In 2005 three of the women (Mary, Angel and Tina) participated in a one–year library and archives training programme. They interned at the Tavira municipal library for some months, but there was no chance of finding a permanent job there. In 2006 and 2007 the same three women participated in a programme that provided comprehensive restaurant training. After some months of practical experience, Tina found employment at a new restaurant close to Cachopo. Today she is employed there as a cook and says that she has found a new family in the restaurant's owners. Mary and Angel also tried to find employment in this field, but so far neither has found a permanent position. Angel is currently working at the day care centre in Cachopo. As for Mary, she was accepted in a social and cultural education training programme, which ran from September 2008 to March 2010. This programme gave Mary a qualification equivalent to a 12th grade (upper secondary) qualification. I have already mentioned that Laura is the president of a regional handicrafts association. Laura has started to act as a trainer in this field; she is frequently asked to organise workshops and small training sessions. She has also opened a small "living" museum in Cachopo. This is a traditional house filled with notable artefacts, where she also engages in weaving. At present Laura is collaborating with two designers on a project aimed at innovating from local handicrafts to create new design products that conform to modern aesthetic standards. The project plans to involve twenty design students. Through this programme, Laura has been able to get a young adult to learn and work with her, in a form of internship. She has also published a small biographical book, transforming the events of her life into poetry.

It is obviously difficult to transform these biographical elements into certainties or patterns. It seems evident, nevertheless, that for some of these women the initial learning processes they were engaged in have led them to change their perception of the value of education and learning. Not only did they take advantage of the opportunities presented to them, they have been proactive in finding new opportunities for learning – and this represents a truly important change for the future.

Discussion and final reflections

There was a time when, inspired by lifelong education, authors from the field of adult education mainly debated education and not learning. In this context, formal education was marked by the school context with all its implications: a clearly assumed intentionality, a rigid character, well–defined objectives and competences, a focus on the curriculum as a norm that is theoretically designed for all (but in reality is designed for middle–class learners and excludes those who deviate from the norm), etc. As for non–formal education, it benefited from a variety of contexts (community, workplace, etc., but never school); it had also intentionality and objectives and could be the object of certification, but it was seen as having some advantages: the ability to be flexible and thus adapt to people (rather than forcing people to adapt to school); the capacity to focus on processes and not necessarily on products. Non–formal education would feed on diversity and be more immune to mechanisms of reproduction. Finally, informal education was typically associated with socialisation and had no assumed intentionality or structured character. In the context of lifelong education, these divisions were made to analyse, not to divide; and in order to stress the virtues of articulating all these educational forms, to help adults to have a better life in all contexts at all ages.

The shift from education to learning has the understandable virtue of focussing on learning – not teaching – and at the same time intends to break the analytical separation between those who teach and those who learn. Not only that, it is undeniable that learning is not only an individual value but should be seen as a collective value. The problem occurs when we try to relate this to the bigger scenario of the growing importance of lifelong learning. Its narrower vision of adults as competent workers who need to adapt to an unstable labour market using the rhetoric of competences will necessarily influence our discourses. The fact that lifelong learning has succeeded in placing all responsibility for professional competence on the shoulders of the individual means that it is the individual who determines his/her own success, choices that might end in reduced employability, etc. Put simply, these concepts of lifelong learning not only reproduce hierarchies and inequalities, they may also create and legitimise new ones (Field 2001).

Taking into account the particular historical moment we are living in, there is often the feeling that we use the language of today to refer to yesterday's ways of viewing adult education. And the task to recover more radical means of adult education turns out to be more urgent today. This could be done simply by highlighting experiences of collective learning

based in popular education – as I believe is the case here. The story of Cachopo is, therefore, first and foremost the story of the anonymous "us" who have succeeded in impressing changes upon their territories and their lives. Some points of this story deserve to be underlined:

First, the community development processes centred on learning began in the most informal way possible: a community forum followed by the informal constitution of informal community groups to try to solve their own problems, in a typical setting of participatory research (Hall 1981). When these groups start to act – even small actions that seem unimportant – they are beginning to learn a fundamental and basic thing: organisation. And when the first results appear, thus feeding the dynamics of participation and building their self–confidence, it is already possible to identify the importance of informal learning. These individuals have learnt how to work together; how to organise themselves to divide tasks; how to look for the information they need; and to look, most often outside their own territory, for the institutions and social actors that might bring them funding possibilities and the ability to make decisions that will affect their lives; they have learnt how to discuss their options and that to take these options implies the responsibility that comes with such choices. We could continue along these lines almost indefinitely but, to sum up: informal learning was indeed fundamental in allowing the community to increase its level of organisation, a basic condition that allowed some problems to be faced and eventually solved. Informal learning was also the basis of participation, which has a clearly circular character: it has to be learnt, and the only way to learn how to participate is by participating. There seems to be no doubt that this happened outside the typical institutions and settings that provide structured education. Informal learning was born out of the activities and interests that are important to individuals and groups, in their everyday lives, and covering a wide range of contexts – and incidentally coinciding with McGivney's (1999) views on informal learning. From a different perspective, a significant part of the informal learning that went on in Cachopo could be labelled be labelled incidental learning – unintentional but conscious – while some could be considered self–directed learning that is both intentional and conscious (Schugurensky 2000).

Secondly, informal learning alone will not bring with it possibilities for social change. There were perfectly structured non–formal learning programmes within these processes, like the training programme for the educators at the preschool centres, or the training programmes for women. These non–formal learning opportunities were a fundamental way for people to gain new knowledge (situated knowledge with specific

applications in their lives) and develop competences, and apply them both in everyday life and in their professional life. In this context the processes of knowledge–building and the ways that people acquire knowledge are of the utmost importance. The fact that it originates from the local culture and the local context, and the fact that it is possible to combine it with innovative aspects, gives people the possibility of creating knowledge that can be used in processes of social transformation. This is also described in the relevant research literature (notably Orefice 1987 and 1988) and elsewhere.

Thirdly, the point of departure was in most cases a very low educational background. Most women from Cachopo had only attended school up to the fourth grade (some up to the fifth or sixth grade). Generally speaking their experiences of formal education had not been not positive – particularly since we are talking about school under Portugal's right–wing dictatorship. The progress these adults have made over the years is therefore amazing. Even more important, their previous engagement in non–formal and rich informal learning processes has allowed people to continue to progress along a path where non–formal learning and *also formal learning* are equally valued. It looks as though these citizens have understood and practised the virtues of something that academics like us tend sometimes to divide.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE IN NON–FORMAL EDUCATION

PETRA JAVRH

Abstract

New ways of transferring information are a phenomenon we are faced by in practically every sphere of our existence. The new media, which have become almost ubiquitous, are increasingly alienating us from reality – something that applies both to young people and the older generations. On the other hand, advanced educational technology brings freshness, and its responsible and considered use can enrich, enhance and simplify the efforts of teachers and improve the achievements of learners. There is, however, a predicament: Are teachers from the field of non–formal adult education professionally capable of dealing with the changes brought by a technologically rich environment? Have they recognised the field of the use of modern information and communications technology as one in which they need to build up their professional excellence? Has sufficient research really been carried out with regard to the use of modern media in adult education and the impact of technologically rich environments on the educational process? How should we respond to those who believe that as adult educators they should persist with tried and tested traditional approaches to learning and as far as possible avoid using new ones? The question of what such dilemmas mean for the quality of teaching provision at the teacher–learner level remains insufficiently explored. Open questions of this kind cause a series of difficulties in practice, above all for teachers. At the same time we come up against a more profound challenge: the questions cited highlight the need for critical reflection on the foundations and ethics of professional work and endeavours in the field of non–formal learning in general. This subject is addressed in the article.

Teachers cannot rely merely on previous professional experience and knowledge, even though these are considerable and they have already been working for many years in this field. Increasingly dynamic social changes are, in fact, visibly changing the needs of participants in non–formal education programmes and the general needs of society for knowledge. The latter consideration demands from teachers and educational institutions a more profound reflection on their mission – on individual and institutional professional excellence.

Keywords: professional excellence, professional development of teachers, career, non–formal adult education, liberal education

Introduction

With their new technologies, technologically rich environments changes our ways of thinking (Walker 2011). They enable and even create new perceptions and new channels and flows of information. The multiple effects of the use of modern information and communications technology on generations of adolescents have already been confirmed by research (cf. Sigman 2010 and 2012, Livingstone 2012, Livingstone and Haddon 2009, Lobe and Muha 2011, Mayer and Moreno 2005). These effects are already visible in the everyday life of young people who spend more and more time in front of screens. They are best reflected in poor social interactions and poorer health in the youngest generations (cf. Sigman 2010), while particular attention has been attracted by the harmful effects on young people of, for example, revealing intimate information on Facebook or similar public media.

A problem is also emerging on the opposite side: it is becoming increasingly evident that those young people – and older people too – who do not have proper access to modern ICT are experiencing exclusion from society in their everyday life. Without the relevant skills to use these technologies they are significantly limited in their possibilities of access to health services, housing, work and knowledge (Vrečer et al. 2010). The latest results of the latest international PIACC survey of adult skills (cf. OECD 2013) further highlighted the situation in this field among adults. Not only in the less developed parts of the world but even in some European countries there is still a part of the population that does not use ICT or does not possess the basic skills to use it in the many everyday tasks demanded by technologically rich environments. The proportion of people with insufficiently developed competences actually varies greatly across Europe. In countries where the level of digital literacy is high (e.g. the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden), less than 7% of people aged 16 to

65 fall into this category. In Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Spain the figure is considerably higher, reaching 23% or even more.

Why are we beginning our reflection on the importance of the professional excellence of teachers in non–formal education with these questions? The answer is simple: there are still insufficiently researched factors at work in technologically rich environments that are inexorably changing people's everyday habits. It is not only the learning habits of children and adolescents that are changing before their teachers' eyes (Štraus et al. 2013), something very similar is also taking place in the field of adult education, and figures show that people are actually becoming "screen–addicted" (Sigman 2007). Various studies cited by Sigman have already confirmed some of the undesirable consequences of spending more time in front of screens, for example a significant growth in attention deficit disorder, altered perception, altered social habits and withdrawal into a virtual world.

"Virtual reality" does not, however, only bring negative consequences like those mentioned above. It also opens the way to hitherto unknown challenges and has several advantages, while at the same time enabling faster, more efficient and more accessible learning (cf. Schroeder 2001). It is these challenges, innovations and positive effects on learning that, in our view, bring an important developmental potential to education. Teachers, particularly educated in the field of non–formal education, need to get to know them, think about them, examine them and test them. This is necessary above all so that they can find the right balance between established professional skills and the new elements that need to be introduced to the educational process when they wish to achieve excellence in the times we live in. As we will show below, the latest research data also confirms the important role of the teacher in non–formal education (Manninen et al. 2014). The teacher is an important factor because the teacher's personality, professionalism and range of knowledge give the participant in education the chance to experience non–formal education as something successful. From this point of view a reflection of the impact of ICT on education and a confrontation of findings on the effects of technologically rich environments with the modern concept of professional excellence in teachers are more than necessary.

The common thread of our further reflections is inspired by two weighty questions: How are skills at coping with technologically rich environments in non–formal learning connected to a teacher's professional excellence? Where do these two fields actually meet and overlap? The field of non–formal learning is more traditionally influenced by the needs and wishes of learners than other fields of education. Given the

ubiquitousness, power and impact of ICT in everyday life, there is no doubt that this is an important field. Are teachers from the field of non–formal adult education professionally capable of dealing with the changes brought by a technologically rich environment? Are they sufficiently aware of how such environments have affected adults in recent decades? And last but not least: are they suitably modernising educational processes and adapting them to these changes? On the basis of these questions, we shall now attempt to shed some light on more recent research and findings regarding the professional development of teachers, with the help of the established concepts of the "professional excellence" and "professional identity" of the teacher.

An important factor in effective non–formal education is the teacher

Data from the BeLL project – the first European comparative study in the field of non–formal adult education, involving researchers from 10 European countries,[1] which ran from 2011 to 2014 and considered the broader effects of adult learning, are quite revealing from this point of view (Manninen et al. 2014). Asked what changes they had observed in their life after participating in non–formal education programmes, adults (who in the year of the study had participated in at least one non–formal education programme) responded by choosing from among 27 answers describing a wide variety of possible experiences and effects. Interestingly, there were no major differences in the results from the ten participating countries, even though the method of organising formal education differs

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considerably from country to country and despite the fact that the study included very different groups of adults from very different non–formal education programmes (cf. Manninen, Thöne–Geyer and Kil 2013). The answers of more than 8,000 adults showed that for the most part non–formal forms of education are today seen as providing a positive educational experience (more than 80% of affirmative answers from the total 8,646 respondents). This makes participants more inclined to take part in similar forms of education in the future, since they consider the experience to be "an important opportunity". It was also shown that following participation in non–formal education their satisfaction and sense of well–being were significantly more positive and that as a result of this they also encouraged other people to enrol in education. Motivation for learning increased the most among participants in IT skills and digital literacy programmes. For those participants with lower levels of education (ISCED 1 or less), changes in their motivation, their views on the importance of education and their learning confidence were more marked than in the case of their better–educated peers. Participants with the lowest level of education in fact gained the most from non–formal education (ibid).

On the other hand the data from the BeLL study showed that respondents noted considerably fewer changes in the fields of direct civic and social engagement, immediate job opportunities and improvement of personal economic situation, and with regard to parenting skills and changes to harmful habits or behaviours (Manninen et al. 2014). These are fields which demand considerable individual changes and of course learning, and which do not change overnight. It is appropriate to ask here how much of a role the teacher actually has in these changes, or to what extent the teacher can contribute to them by virtue of his or her professional excellence.

Some interesting answers are already being offered by the first results of the BeLL study (ibid.). Among other things respondents assessed the extent to which the factors listed below influenced the changes they described as a consequence of participating in non–formal learning.

The factor on the evaluation scale that participants in the study selected as being most important was "The fact that I was able to learn new things" (85.6% affirmative answers). This was closely followed by: "Content/theme of the course", "Teaching methods" and "The teacher as a person". The importance attributed to the factors "Other participants in the group" (55.1% affirmative answers) and "Group activities" (57.8 % affirmative answers) was a third less than that attributed to the opportunity to learn new things. On the basis of more detailed comparisons with regard

to independent variables, the researchers also found a number of differences between genders and age groups, as follows:

"Teachers as persons as well as group factors are valued more by female and older learners, whereas teaching methods, content and support by the teachers are more important for younger learners" (Sava and Thöne–Geyer 2013).

Table 7–1 Importance of various listed factors for changes cited by respondents as a consequence of non–formal learning

	important/very important
	% affirmative answers
The fact that I was able to learn new things	85.6
The content/theme of the course	85.2
Teaching methods	81.3
Teacher as a person	79.9
My opportunity to be an active member of the group	65.1
Individual support and guidance	62.7
Opportunity to do something with my own hands	61.8
Group activities	57.8
Other learners in the group	55.1

Source: Manninen, J. et al. 2014. *Benefits of Lifelong Learning in Europe.* Main results of the BeLL project. Bonn: DIE.

A more precise insight into the importance of individual factors was provided by the data from the open question. After evaluating the various factors, the respondents additionally explained, using examples, "why and how these factors were important for the changes they observed". The central role of the teacher as a professional figure was reflected very clearly in their answers. Of the three categories relating to the role of the teacher ("teaching methods", "personality", "expertise"), the one that was revealed to be most important was "teaching methods", since this category was cited as the most important factor by almost a quarter of respondents (24.2%). "Personality" and "expertise" were attributed almost equal importance (by 18.3% and 18.2% of respondents respectively).

For the participants in this study it is extremely important that the teacher was able, in his or her teaching, to provide or make use of interactive and varied methods, and that these were contextually selected and supported by practical exercises. Respondents also considered important the kind of individual support and guidance offered by the teacher, for example whether the teacher provided suitable feedback on individual progress and the extent to which the teacher was skilled in his or her craft. Also particularly interesting is the respondents' view of what expertise consists of. According to their assessment, a teacher is an expert if he or she is: knowledgeable, committed to the learner's achievement, uses comprehensible language, provides clarity, adapts instructions to the learner's experience and skills, creates a humane learning climate and provides adequate learning material.

Surprisingly, the role of the learning group and other participants also appeared as an important factor in the open answers. This is surprising because on the evaluation scale this factor appeared to be the least important (55.1% affirmative answers). It appears that "the group and other participants" are important to participants in non–formal education because they provide support and, alongside the teacher's feedback, "act as a reflector" and to a certain extent "provide knowledge and exchange". Other factors such as the programme, the composition of the group, learner's internal resources appeared to be less important in these open answers supported by examples.

If we paraphrase the results shown, we could say that these data indicate the importance of the teacher as an integrated individual: expertise in a given area, a suitable repertoire of methods and proficiency in them, and balanced personal development that also includes other fields, not only the professional field. In essence these factors are a good confirmation of the key characteristics of the "critically responsible teacher" that were defined on the basis of studies conducted in Slovenia on the professional development of very good teachers (Javrh, 2007; see below for more detail), and correspond well with the concept of new professionalism (cf. Hargreaves 2010) and initial studies from the field of the career development of teachers (Huberman 1993).

If we take into account the results cited, a reflection on the extent to which teachers from the field of non–formal education are professionally capable of dealing with changes brought by a technologically rich environment would appear to be very appropriate. Conflict and ambiguity of roles appear when the professional is faced with conflicting expectations. The danger of a conflict between the roles of the teacher is most frequent when discrepancies exist between ideas of what makes a

good teacher (Wood and McCarthy 2002). We shall begin this reflection by focusing on the concepts of excellence and professional identity. In this article we understand the expression "teacher" in the generic sense; it covers the broad group of professionals involved in the education both of children and adolescents and of adults.

Excellence

Professional excellence may be described as the property or characteristic of being excellent, but it is not simply a synonym for quality. Excellence is a going beyond, a commitment and a confirmation of remarkableness and quality at the same time. Rossiter makes a similar point when he explains that striving for excellence does not only include progress in the narrow professional field but also progress in other areas such as communication, interpersonal relations, ethics and similar (cf. Rossiter 2008).

Why excellence? A technologically rich environment presupposes the mastery of a range of skills which, in the past, were not usually the subject of particular emphasis within the teaching profession. New features undoubtedly include the requirement for the teacher to maintain an ethically cautious attitude in a plural information society or in the "application" of knowledge for technological progress, proficiency in the use of more complex educational communications and technology, and familiarity with brand–new information networks and the ability to use them responsibly.[2] Other requirements include an awareness of global dimensions and the role of the individual as a citizen of the European Union, a positive attitude towards cultural and ethnic diversity, naklonjenost mobilnosti, etc. (cf. Common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications 2005). Yet another new requirement is the concept of global education, which was originally focused on strengthening civil society and particularly wishes to contribute to the development of non–formal learning (cf. Global education guidelines 2009). These ideas demand considerable changes from the teacher and from the education system, not only in content but also in skills, and above all in attitudes and behaviour in the field of work and in relation to the social environment.

These challenges can be a potential for development, a new quality in the education system, but they demand nothing less than excellence from

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[2] E.g. the new emerging databases created by users themselves, with an accumulation of unverified information.

the key actors (cf. Rossiter 2008). As highlighted by the data presented above, the key actor is the teacher. Below we will focus in particular on a more specific question: when and how does a teacher decide to perform his or her work in the field of adult education in a high–quality manner and put professional excellence into practice? First, however, let us define our understanding of a few more basic concepts.

Professionalisation is a complex process that begins with vocational training and then gradually continues and is supplemented by experiential learning in the course of the individual's career. Professional development as an integrated process of growth connects the personal, social and professional levels. This process is not isolated, limited to the individual, and must be enriched by cooperation and cooperative learning in a professional community (within the profession), the assistance and cooperation of colleagues, and also respect for one's own work and its appropriate presentation (Javrh and Kalin 2010). The professional development of the teacher includes the more specific activities through which individuals develop professional skills, knowledge, expertise and other professional characteristics. In the broadest sense, this means all education and training, and at the same time direct practical experience which the individual has reflected on appropriately.

Professional identity of the teacher

An individual's decision that in the future he or she will dedicate himself to teaching is only the first phase in the development of a professional identity (cf. Day et al. 2006). In fact the choice of an occupation rests on certain assumptions, on the basis of which the individual evaluates his or her own experience and constructs a professional image. This is what Muršak calls the "anticipated identity" (Muršak, Javrh and Kalin 2011). This is the process of identifying with a future occupation that takes place while studying or during systematic preparation for performing that occupation (Dubar 2000). In the opinion of Muršak and Dubar, this "anticipated identity" is also extremely important later when the "real" process of forming a professional identity in a real working environment begins. Practice in Slovenia shows (Muršak, Javrh and Kalin 2011) that individuals choose the teaching profession for very different reasons and with varying degrees of maturity in their career decision. It is possible to find fairly diverse groups of professionals from the widest variety of specialist fields in the occupational role of teacher.

During the course of the working cycle (cf. Schein 1978) teachers play very different roles and change them with varying frequency. Being a

teacher in the field for which one has actually trained and specialised during the period of formal education is for many only a transitional period in the collection of different jobs that they perform as teachers.[3] In these circumstances, the profession of teacher becomes more demanding and responsible, while a misunderstanding or mistaken interpretation of changed roles can have a negative effect on how teachers themselves create their professional image. In Europe it is increasingly being seen as important for teachers to develop comprehensive competences that also include work with adults. Not only in Slovenia but in other European countries too, the profession of teacher is no longer predominantly tied to one field, for example work with young people and children, but also intertwines with work that simultaneously extends into other fields, for example adult education (cf. Guthu and Gravdahl 2008).

In connection with the concept of professional identity, it is also necessary to mention the process of burnout (Maslach 1998). The phenomenon of teacher burnout as a result of great expectations and pressures and constant new demands is a field that is too little researched and a reality that is too little taken into consideration (Vandenberghe and Huberman 2006), but plays a part in forming the teacher's professional identity. A study of the development of the career of teachers in Slovenia (Javrh 2007) has shown that after somewhere between ten and eighteen years of work, teachers are already reporting burnout and the noticeable consequences of this process. They are, however, divided into two groups. The first group consists of teachers who gradually wear themselves out entirely and soon feel more intense negative consequences. The second group consists of "relaxed" teachers who, despite burnout, succeed again and again in gaining and re–establishing a healthy balance and living a full professional life. Analysis of biographies in this study has shown that both groups suffer burnout but that they differ in terms of the final outcome (ibid.). In contrast with the second group, teachers from the first group become increasingly weak in their attitude as professionals and, eventually, as human beings; they are overcome by helplessness, which is the least desirable development of a career path.

In the disengagement phase (cf. Huberman 1993), which as a rule is where we classify teachers with more than 30 years' service, the consequences of burnout among Slovene teachers can be traced in all teachers who enter

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[3] Teachers in the formal education system do their work as, for example, primary school, secondary school or higher education teachers, but they can work in non–formal education, where they become counselling and management workers, education organisers and specialists in other positions within the education system.

this phase, but are most evident in "embittered" teachers. The majority of teachers already have a number of problems in this phase simply as a result of physiological decline. Embittered teachers, who are entirely burnt out, use a lot – too much – of their free time just be able to cope with their work obligations. They look for different ways to recover their strength, because they are increasingly short of the energy they need to perform their basic tasks at work. From a detailed analysis of their biographies (Javrh 2007) it is evident that exhaustion leads some teachers to neglect their family obligations and abandon free–time activities in order to be able to cope with work. The situation is different for the "relaxed" group of teachers, who despite burnout always manage to find a new equilibrium and ways to mitigate the consequences of burnout, and typically have an unreduced tendency towards a critical–responsible attitude to work and the need for active involvement both in work and in free–time activities and the professional exploration of the new.

A differentiation between two levels of identity in teachers in the course of their entire career cycle – the so–called macro–self and micro–self – was first made by researchers decades ago. Macro–self factors are social class, religious experiences and the social, political and economic climate of one's life experiences, while the micro–self is connected to early childhood experiences, home, parents, literature, art, teachers, coaches and one's adult family (cf. Woods in Knowles 1992, 103–104).

Among the fundamental factors with a significant impact on the professional excellence of teachers is the way in which the formation of professional identity takes place, or in other words how professional socialisation took place (Beijaard 2000, Muršak 2009, Marentič Požarnik et al. 2005, Javrh 2007). Studies (e.g. Kira and Balkin 2014) show that the process of professional socialisation cannot – in contrast to what was believed until recently – be limited to the period of preparation for a career and the first few years of work.

Muršak, taking Dubar's conceptualisation of professional identity as a starting point (Dubar 2000) emphasises that the development of professional identity begins during the period of education, although real development is tied to the performance of professional work and is above all dependent on the reference group of which the individual is part when performing his or her professional work (Muršak, Javrh and Kalin 2010). The formation of professional identity is influenced by social, mental and economic factors (cf. Hozjan 2006) which are tightly interwoven, regardless of whether these are direct or indirect factors. With regard to the importance of social context, Niemi underlines the experience in Finland where the whole of society "accepts teachers as those who have a

moral responsibility for their work" (Niemi, Toom and Kallioniemi 2012, 36–37). She underlines the important links between respect for learning and education in Finnish culture and national identity (ibid., 20), in this way shedding light on the remarkably good results obtained by Finland in international studies such as PISA and PIAAC.

Analysis of the career paths of teachers and different groups of future teachers has led Slovene researchers to the conclusion that a "solid professional identity is the foundation of the teacher's professional development" (Muršak, Javrh and Kalin 2011). On the basis of a combination of empirical data and recent theoretical views (cf. Dubar 2000, Goodson 2003), the authors of the Slovene study just cited indicate two basic periods in the formation of professional identity:

a) the period of anticipatory professional socialisation, which takes place during preparation for work as a teacher and is characterised by the fact that as well as guided preparation and planned development of competences for this work, there is also a constant unplanned and unguided formation of the professional image through identification with the experienced teachers with whom future teachers will come into contact;

b) the period when the individual actually starts work, at first of course as a trainee and then as a relatively independent practitioner and later as an expert in his or her field (ibid.). In this second period three phases followed each other (Zouggar in Muršak, Javrh and Kalin 2011): The phase of *career entry*, represented by the first encounter with professional work and with the real reference group and the conditions, values and norms that prevail in it. The phase of *installation and confronting* the discrepancy between idealised images and reality. This is the second phase in which the teacher, unlike the members of other professions, is also separately confronted with learners, who, along with the reference group (which is a feature of all professions) provide feedback about the teacher and his or her role. This view frequently contrasts with the view of the teacher's colleagues or narrow social environment. This causes additional tensions and discords which the teacher has to overcome or resolve in an appropriate way in order to create a relatively stable professional identity.

The third phase, that of *final conversion*,

"means the teacher's internalisation of rules, norms, models of behaviour, modes of action and pedagogical communication. This phase is all the

more important in the initial period because it creates itself as a model of behaviour, self–knowledge, self representation" (Muršak, Javrh and Kalin 2011, 131).

Forming, maintaining and changing a modern professional identity is a dynamic, individual process which is affected by the external processes of globalisation, the spread of various information media and the new connection between society and cultures. It should be emphasised that a modern professional identity no longer envisages loyalty to an individual profession. Instead, the individual must develop a much broader spectrum of professional values. The concept of employment has been replaced by employability, for which new knowledge about career development is necessary.

How much of the professional image of a teacher is represented by excellence?

Professional image is certainly formed under the pressure of the individual's personal development and the development of the family cycle (cf. Schein 1978), but also under the influence of past life history. The value that society places on individual types of study also influences its formation. The public's opinion of a given profession is fairly accurately reflected in the economic situation of the members of that profession. Judyth Sachs (2000), for example, points out that in the USA faculties of education rank lowest on the scale of academic prestige. She establishes that this directly affects the formation of the professional image of the teacher. Theoreticians point to the increasing "proletarianisation" of the teaching profession in the stratification of society, which is not only dependent on narrow political interests (cf. Goodson 1992, Hargreaves 1993, Labaree 2000). They warn that this is a profound social process beginning at the turn of the millennium and involving significant changes in societies, and that more recent discussions of the subject no longer doubt the existence of this process (cf. Goodson 2003). This, however, raises a serious new question: can a solid, positive professional image, for which it is also important, from the point of view of the individual – as Konrad believed – whether the "chosen career is valued" (cf. Konrad 1996) form in such circumstances? The claim that "university/study experiences are not a strong component of the professional image of teachers" (Knowles 1992, 126) is challenged by more recent thinking. Hauge cites a series of studies that have confirmed the more optimistic conclusion that "well–designed teacher training programmes have a

noticeable effect on students and their beliefs with regard to teaching and the role of the teacher" (Hauge 2000, 167). Similar conclusions have been reached by Slovene researchers (cf. Muršak, Javrh and Kalin 2011).

Slovene studies on the professional development of teachers

Hargreaves (2003) defines four phases in the razumevanju development of teachers' professionalism: the pre–professional phase, autonomous professionalism, collegial professionalism and the post–professional phase (adapted from Marentič Požarnik et al. 2005).

The *pre–professional phase* covers conceptions of teaching in the first half of the last century, when "teaching is a demanding job but not a technically difficult one"; for the most part it involves the repetition of methodical patterns which the teacher experienced as a pupil. *Autonomous professionalism* is the period in which the concept of "professional autonomy" begins to emerge. Education and training are focused on individual teachers, although they often feel isolated and have too little self–confidence. *Collegial professionalism* appears with the growing complexity of the teacher's work and presupposes a "cooperative culture" between teachers, the introduction of new and diverse methods, and "learning communities". Although the teacher is autonomous, this does not mean that he or she is isolated. The so–called *post–professional phase* has developed, in Hargreaves's opinion, above all under the influence of globalisation, increasing competition, market principles and pressure for international comparability of knowledge (cf. Hargreaves in Marentič Požarnik et al. 2005).

The view from another perspective is also interesting. The following empirical qualitative and quantitative data are taken from various studies carried out in Slovenia between 2004 and 2010 (cf. Javrh 2007, Javrh and Kalin 2010, Muršak et al. 2011). When teachers themselves describe their own career or the professional development of their colleagues, they mention several types of teachers (Javrh 2007). Using their words, we can describe these types as: the "born teacher", the "routine teacher", the "hostage of the profession", the "moderately ambitious teacher", the "teacher who wants more" and the "very ambitious teacher".Some teachers know even from childhood that they are going to become teachers. They have never even imagined doing anything else, even though they have opportunities and offers elsewhere. Despite the demanding nature of the profession they retain their freshness and vitality until late into their career. The "routine" or average teacher enters the teaching profession as

an "idealist", works very hard to attain all the necessary skills, but then, as his or her career progresses, this assiduousness "suddenly ends" – or so it appears to outside observers. Such a teacher begins to "rest" and work becomes simply a matter of routine. Such teachers are often "disappointed teachers". The moderately ambitious teacher likes to study and strengthen his or her role in the collective, and progresses gradually, sometimes to management positions. When they are older, such teachers often "come to a stop". There are also teachers who are "hostages of the profession". These are individual teachers who yearn to work outside the education sector but are no longer competitive in the labour market and no longer have the opportunity or the strength to change career. It is possible to conclude, from in–depth interviews with teachers, that after ten years of working as a teacher, such a teacher is in practical terms no longer competitive in the labour market and does not have sufficient opportunities to find comparable employment in other professions (Javrh 2007). Younger teachers are generally more active and wish to progress. They perceive general changes positively and wish to take them into account, and prepare themselves for them or respond to them as best they can. By continuing their studies and obtaining higher formal education qualifications, they aim to open up the possibility of a "backup" career plan. Highly committed teachers who have ambitions and do not hide this reach a career plateau too quickly (Rotondo and Perrewe 2000). True careerists are, in the eyes of colleagues, those teachers who strive for other goals – above all they are interested in money, power and position – rather than devoting themselves to teaching as such. Teachers consider that examples of the latter type of teacher are actually few and far between.

Regardless of the fact that in practice they may deviate considerably from the ideal, teachers are generally quite radical in their views of what makes the ideal teacher. When we look more closely at how teachers describe their professional models, we see that their criteria and demands are high (cf. Javrh 2007). Quite a number of elements of excellence can be identified in them: vitality as a consequence of a healthy but dynamic lifestyle, openness to other people and social skills, "being a teacher" is a way of life, high ethical values, lifelong learning, cooperativeness, integrality, etc.

These findings prompt the question of whether these attributes also describe the image of the ideal teacher desired by society. As a starting point for a comparison, we took the Common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications (2005), which is a document that represents an initial consensus among the different practices, views and traditions in Europe. The document states that the modern teacher should

be able to work with others, work with knowledge, technology and information and work with and in society. The biggest gap that may be observed in our comparison is in the dimension of being able to work with and in society. With regard to the individual image of the good teacher, the colleague whom it is worth imitating, the answers of Slovene teachers in 2005 contained no traces of characteristics such as: understanding of global responsibility and the role of EU citizens, respect for different cultures, mobility and international cooperation, the question of the ethical dimension of the knowledge society, a balance between respecting the cultural diversity of learners and the common values of Slovene culture, understanding the factors of social cohesion and exclusion. These dimensions of key competences significantly characterise the professional accountability of the modern teacher and place his or her professional excellence in a new light.

In Slovenia (cf. Javrh and Kalin 2010) the need for a modernisation of training that would enable teachers to develop or consolidate missing competences is clearly reflected. It is not so much the need for new content that teachers feel. Rather, they would like to see a modernisation of approaches and due consideration for the differences between experienced teachers and beginners, in other words the recognition that perfectly legitimate differences exist between teachers' needs, depending on the phase of development of their professional path and the quality of their career development. If we gave mature teachers approaching retirement more opportunity to work with and train newcomers just starting out in the profession, we could perhaps prevent many difficulties relating to the professional excellence of young teachers. The role of "seniors" would motivate older teachers to systematise and articulate their wealth of knowledge, which would bring them the new satisfaction of feeling that they are still important members of the professional community.

Huberman (1993) was the first to consider ideas of this kind. He looked at changes in professional training in Switzerland that could contribute to the best possible scenario of a fulfilling career as a teacher. He proposed an "artisanal model", which in modern language means a training structure that is modernised to the extent that training would motivate teachers to take part in professionally supported permanent action research both inside and outside the school. Huberman essentially presented the need for professional development that requires balanced professional support in all phases of the career, including the mature career phase. He saw teacher training as something that gives the teacher the opportunity to test newly acquired knowledge in the classroom in an

original, informal manner. He also found that the system of professional training cannot in itself motivate uninterested teachers and can, at the most, deepen their resistance to everything they are forced to do (ibid.). He found that the model of "detailed testing in the classroom", as he called this action research, is not suitable for these teachers. Such teachers first need to be moved from isolation, for which systematic professional efforts are necessary (see Huberman in Heargreaves and Fullan 1993).

In this connection Slovene teachers felt that it would first be necessary to ensure that embittered teachers saw more sense in participating in training programmes than merely collecting points (Javrh 2007). Some training should be different and specially adapted to mature teachers. The attitude towards training among individuals who strongly expressed the characteristics of the "critically responsible teacher" is particularly interesting. For these teachers, education can be an effective motivator for development and progress in quality which leads to professional excellence.

A range of circumstances however exist which, through the process of professional training, can consolidate a teacher in a negative direction of career development. If teachers are forced to participate in training, this only heightens their dissatisfaction, isolation and the feeling that they are "hostages of the profession" and have no other choice. If training is not adapted to teachers' needs, participation in training merely drains them and they come back from seminars feeling "sick". Education and training that overlooks the fact that the participants also include embittered teachers is neglecting its essential mission – that of helping teachers understand their actual situation and offering them a new professional vision.

It would be wrong to expect training on its own to be capable of transforming the course of a career. Analysis shows (cf. Javrh and Kalin 2010) that several factors need to come into play in the development of a teacher's career in order for it to develop in the direction of excellence: a stimulating working environment, adequate "motivational" leadership from head teachers/managers, suitable training that takes into account differences in teachers' career development and, once again, the most important thing: the teacher's personal commitment to professionalism and ethics – in other words to excellence.

Conclusion

New technologies are increasingly alienating us – young and old alike – from reality. On the other hand, advanced education technologies can bring new opportunities and challenges to educational practice by enriching, enhancing and simplifying the work of teachers. How, then,

should we answer the question of whether teachers are ready to face the inevitable consequences of new information and communications technology in non–formal education?

When the environment in which education takes place is changing, when the technology of education and learning is changing, when the needs of participants are changing, when the values of educators in relation to education are changing – what are teachers supposed to rely on in their working practice?

In all these changes, however, one constant remains: the human being, the individual, and, within the individual, some universal mechanisms. We have offered some insight into the question of the key processes in a teacher's professional life that remain the same despite different circumstances, techniques, contents and models.

Excellent teachers try to form a dynamic learning environment by creatively combining constants with innovations. Constants may be understood in these circumstances as those basic elements of learning (learner–teacher) that remain universal regardless of new technologies. Innovations and experiments are creative approaches whereby teachers introduce new elements both at the level of content and teaching aids and at the level of cognitive processes. In doing so they are also developing – with the help of experts and learners – technological solutions in a virtual space that represents a new challenging circumstance in education in general. Burnt out, helpless and embittered teachers work in a different way. A series of critical circumstances and overlooked harmful processes have fatally undermined their professional identity.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

VALIDATION OF NON–FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

MARKO RADOVAN

Abstract

In recent years, validation of learning outside the context of formal education has been gaining in importance in the field of education. The challenges faced by educational institutions when recognising knowledge from very diverse fields require the systemic regulation of procedures of assessment and validation. As is evident from the literature review and research results, a great deal has been done in the legislative field, but educational institutions need more guidance on procedures for evaluating non–formal and informal learning. This problem is particularly challenging in formal education, where an individual's previously acquired knowledge, skills and competences should be recognised, but institutions lack procedures by means of which to unambiguously determine whether the individual in question meets curriculum standards. Studies used to evaluate the application of legislative provisions in practice also point to the complexity of the problem of recognition of non–formal and informal learning. They show that in spite of an adequate legal basis, non–formally or informally acquired knowledge has still not gained the recognition it deserves. This chapter also presents the comparative results of the project "Towards a Lifelong Learning Society: The Contribution of the Education System" (LLL2010), co–funded by the European Commission within the 6th Framework Programme. Some results indicate that the arrangements for recognising non–formal and informal learning are weak in the majority of countries. Some countries have well–developed systems of accreditation; it was noted, however, that the assessment required for accreditation may

discourage some people from engaging with learning, thus potentially increasing social exclusion.

Keywords: lifelong learning, formal education, non–formal education, informal learning, experiential learning, accreditation, validation, international comparison

Introduction

In recent years the recognition of learning outside the formal education system has been gaining in importance in the field of education. The challenges faced by educational institutions in recognising knowledge from very diverse fields require the systemic regulation of the procedures of assessment and validation.

The idea of validating previously acquired knowledge in adult education is not a new one. Even "classic" adult education authors attributed great importance to this form of learning and underlined the need to take it into account when planning and implementing education programmes for adults (e.g. Knowles 1980). The documents produced in this period pursued objectives that could be characterised as more humanistic. UNESCO's 1972 report "Learning to be – The world of education today and tomorrow", for example, emphasises the role of non–formal learning in eliminating social inequality and unequal opportunities in education and the greater democratisation of society (Faure et al. 1972). Fordham (1993, quoted in: Hozjan 2010) states that the principal topics in the discussion of the importance of non–formal learning in the 1970s were focused above all on the needs of deprived groups, care for special categories of people, clearly defined purposes of learning, and flexibility in organisation and methods. The recognition of learning that has taken place outside the formal system therefore has a clearly inclusive role, since it enables underprivileged adults who have been unsuccessful in this system (the education system), or to whom the system was not accessible, to evaluate and verify their knowledge.

On the basis of an international comparative study, Schuetze and Slowey (2002, 318) define the institutional and systemic factors that either hinder or support the participation of adults in higher education:

1. institutional differentiation in the education system (e.g. horizontal and vertical differentiation, possibility of choice and being informed, openness of the system, equivalence of general and vocational paths, coordination between different sectors/programmes),
2. institutional governance (e.g. institutional autonomy and flexibility)

3. accessibility (specific policies and strategies for informing about lifelong learning, open and flexible access, recognition of work and life experiences, special routes of entry, participating in regional development/service for the community)
4. mode of study (modular structure and credit system, possibility of part–time study, distance learning, independent study)
5. financial assistance and other support
6. continuing education opportunities (e.g. provision of suitable programmes, suitability of timetables, affordable fees).

In this paper we aim to briefly introduce this important issue and illustrate it with some empirical results obtained in the research project "Lifelong Learning 2010 – Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: The Contribution of the Education System; hereinafter: LLL2010", which took place within the context of the 6th framework programme of the European Union.

The main focus of research attention within the LLL2010 project was on discussion and analysis of the role played by the formal education system in providing adult education and lifelong learning. Within this context, the question is raised of the mutual connection and role of non–formal learning in designing formal adult education in a given country. In this context we studied the ways in which inclusion in non–formal education can influence the individual's opportunities in formal education. Below we shall briefly present the importance of and possible connections between formal and non–formal learning contexts. The actual nature and outcome of these connections, the extent to which various unofficial and non–formally acquired qualifications are accepted in the formal education system, where particular attention is paid to supporting (potential) participants within the context of the education system.

Development of validation of non–formal and informal learning in the European Union and Slovenia

Since publication of the report "Lifelong Learning for All" (OECD 1996), lifelong learning has been treated as one of the strategies for strengthening economic progress and as a tool which can contribute to establishing and maintaining social stability. Lifelong learning is described as the development of flexibility, credit transfer and validation pathways, and qualifications frameworks designed to open up universal access and opportunities for further and continuing education and training. In this way the validation of non–formal and informal learning is understood as a way

to make visible the entire scope of knowledge and experience held by an individual, irrespective of the context where the learning originally took place. In this sense validation becomes a key way to promote lifelong learning (Colardyn and Bjornavold 2004, 69).

In recent decades the initiative with regard to the validation of non–formal and informal (experiential) learning has been seized by the European Union. In European documents, the recognition and validation of prior learning is mentioned as one of the key conditions for the successful development of lifelong learning – although with a more economic connotation. Through the recognition of knowledge acquired through non–formal and informal learning, lifelong learning should help bring learning closer to the needs of the knowledge society. This is also closely connected to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives, under which the EU should aim to become

> "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge–based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" by 2010 [and beyond] (Lisbon Strategy 2000).

The European Union's Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000) also emphasises that one of the key conditions for the effective development of the system of lifelong learning is the valuing of learning in order to

> "[...] significantly improve the ways in which learning participation and outcomes are understood and appreciated, particularly in non–formal and informal learning" (EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning 2000, 15).

The European Commission likewise mentions the validation of non–formal or informal learning as one of the more important areas of education through which one of the fundamental principles of lifelong learning is realised – the equivalence of learning irrespective of how it was acquired (Commission of the European Communities 2004).

Slovenia is, of course, actively included in European trends. In the publication *Update to the European Inventory on Validation of Non–formal and informal learning* (Hawley, Otero and Duchemin 2010), the countries of the European Union (together with some associated countries) are classified with regard to the degree of development of the system for validation of non–formal and informal learning in one of the following four categories: high, medium–high, medium–low and low.

Table 8–1 EU countries in terms of degree of development of the system of validation of non–formal and informal learning

High	Medium–high	Medium–low	Low
Finland, France, Netherlands, Norway and Portugal	Denmark, England, Germany, Romania, Scotland, Spain and Sweden	Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Slovenia	Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland and Turkey

Source: Hawley, Otero and Duchemin 2010, 6.

As we can see in Table 8–1, the countries with the most developed system of validation of non–formal and informal learning include Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal. Slovenia is in the group of countries where the degree of development of the system of validation of non–formal and informal learning is classified as medium–low.

In the case of Slovenia we may consider the (formal) start of recognition of all forms of learning to be the adoption of the National Vocational Qualifications Act (2007), in which the conditions and procedures for the assessment and validation of non–formally acquired knowledge are defined. The Adult Education Act (2006) also recognises the importance of non–formally acquired knowledge, since it allows the possibility of obtaining a state–approved educational qualification via the identification and validation of knowledge through examinations or on the basis of public documents (Adult Education Act 2006, Article 8). Within the formal education system, possibilities of validation of non–formal learning have appeared above all in education programmes that are closer to the labour market. These possibilities are defined in the Vocational Education and Training Act (2006), the Higher Vocational Education Act (2004) and the Higher Education Act (2006).

The mere acceptance of the equivalence of knowledge acquired outside the education system is, however, not enough. Alongside legislation, it is necessary to regulate or develop procedures and instruments through which to evaluate and validate this knowledge. As underlined by the report from the Slovenian Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Vuković et al. 2008), the validation of non–formal and informal learning in formal education means that:

- where an individual has acquired knowledge, skills and competences outside the context of school, this needs to be recognised, according to a procedure by which it is possible to establish unambiguously that the individual has achieved the standards laid down by the curriculum as the basis for building knowledge or as a standard in an individual subject or parts thereof;
- an individual's possession of specific knowledge and skills which would otherwise need to be acquired should, in the case of such individual, be exploited as an opportunity for the high–quality acquisition of new knowledge and skills; not only in the case of acquisition of new general, specialist–theoretical and practical knowledge, but, in particular, for acquiring those key competences which are the basis for autonomous activity by the individual in the modern world and which support the principle of lifelong learning;
- in the education process, the evaluation of knowledge and the achievement of set standards of knowledge are important, but not the evaluation of paths to knowledge with elements that define formal education (contact hours, duration, etc.);
- it is necessary to define the methods by which knowledge, skills and competences acquired through prior formal, non–formal and informal learning are taken into consideration – and at what level (ibid., 15–16).

The complexity of the issue of the recognition of non–formal and informal learning is also pointed out by other studies, in which the application of legislative provisions in practice is evaluated. These studies have found that despite the existence of an adequate legal basis, the recognition of non–formally or informally acquired knowledge is still not established to the desired extent (Hozjan 2010, Svetina and Vilič Klenovšek 2011), although it is better established in adult education than in "youth" (formal) education.

Analysis of the procedures for evaluating prior learning in the field of adult education in Slovenia has found that in every network or organisation included in the analysis, a specific aspect of identification, evaluation or validation is developed or realised. This aspect is usually conditioned by the purposes of these procedures, their content and the target groups for which they are intended (Svetina and Vilič Klenovšek 2011):

- in *secondary schools* the emphasis is on the evaluation and recognition of formally acquired knowledge in young people and

adults and, to a lesser extent up to now, the evaluation and recognition of non–formally acquired knowledge, both in young people and adults;

- in *educational organisations for adults and adult education guidance centres*, non–formally and informally acquired knowledge is identified with the help of the preparation of education biographies, counselling in the choice of an appropriate education programme, learning aids, etc. Identification, evaluation and validation procedures come into play in various situations, e.g. with regard to specific certificates or examinations (for foreign languages, ECDL, etc.), inclusion in the NVQ procedure (NVQ = National Vocational Qualifications), enrolment in secondary school programmes for adults, etc.;

- identification, evaluation and validation procedures are a key part of the *NVQ system*, since via these procedures and the preparation of a portfolio, the individual can demonstrate, in full or in part, that on the basis of formally or non–formally acquired knowledge and experience he or she has attained defined standards of knowledge at the level of a specific NVQ;

- in the *activities of the Employment Service of Slovenia*, the regular provision of services for the labour market for the unemployed and jobseekers also includes the identification of formally and non–formally acquired knowledge for the determination of employment goals, the preparation of employment plans, the finding of suitable employment and inclusion in suitable measures to increase employability (Svetina and Vilič Klenovšek 2011, 31).

Results of quantitative research

The results presented below come from two pieces of research which we carried out as part of the European LLL2010 project. The first piece of research – in which we studied the characteristics and experience of participants in formal adult education – was quantitative (surveys with participants), while the second was qualitative (interviews with representatives of institutions providing adult education programmes and representatives of ministries).

Methodology

For the needs of the quantitative research, two questionnaires were developed. One was used to collect information from formal adult

education institutions and the other to obtain information from participants enrolled in programmes provided by these institutions. The questionnaire for institutions consisted of three sections: characteristics of the educational institution, characteristics of the programme and general questions. The questionnaire for participants consisted of four sections: on education, participation in education, personal details and details relating to employment.

The target population consisted of adults enrolled in formal education programmes at all levels of education. They were defined in the research as: those enrolled in a formal education programme who enrolled in the programme as adult participants and who finished full–time education at least two years ago. Full–time students in elementary, secondary and higher education were excluded from the research. The survey included 13,293 participants from 13 countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Scotland and Slovenia), roughly 250 from each level of education (the data were later weighted). The survey was carried out in the first half of 2007.

Results

When an individual is deciding to re–enter the formal education system, the requirements for re–enrolment in a programme are one of the important factors. What conditions did the individual have to meet in order to be able to enrol in the education programme?

Table 8–2 Entrance requirements by ISCED level and countries, %

	ISCED 1–2		ISCED 3		ISCED 4		ISCED 5–6	
	Previous qualification	Entrance test	Previous qualification	Entrance test	Previous qualification	Entrance test	Previous qualification	Entrance test
Austria	33.8	60.6	26.2	23.6	29.7	18.7	61.7	63.0
Belgium FL	6.5	10.6	25.9	29.7	61.0	20.4	90.1	16.7
Bulgaria	84.1	20.9	96.9	6.7	92.0	53.8	95.7	54.3
England	1.8	17.2	13.7	29.5	28.9	62.8	54.8	51.9
Estonia	84.2	41.1	96.5	60.0	97.2	65.9	91.3	69.7
Hungary	70.0	20.0	81.9	12.7	95.1	11.9	91.2	64.7
Ireland	1.2	38.2	13.0	58.1	20.0	76.4	44.3	42.3
Lithuania	95.9	45.6	91.2	44.3	89.8	63.3	98.1	31.5
Norway	51.3	42.2	69.2	24.3	72.5	22.5	86.0	18.9
Russia	55.0	69.3	75.3	53.0	86.6	75.5	86.3	85.9
Scotland	2.9	14.1	9.6	59.0	10.3	77.4	63.3	62.5
Slovenia	67.5	37.2	82.5	38.5	87.4	27.4	95.6	8.4

Source: Boeren et al. 2011.

It may be seen from Table 8–2 that prior qualifications (diploma, certificate) are more frequently requested in the countries of central and eastern Europe (Table 8–2). In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Russia and Slovenia, adult participants at all levels of education indicated more frequently than those in the other countries that prior qualifications were a condition for enrolment in their selected education programme. In England, Scotland and Ireland, this condition was less necessary. Interestingly, the results for Norway are closer in this sense to the countries of central and eastern Europe than to England, Scotland and Ireland, which indicates a slightly higher level of requirements for prior qualifications in comparison to the overall average. The results in Austria and Belgium are somewhere in between, although in Belgium prior qualifications were only requested from approximately 6% of respondents in the case of the lowest level of education. Differences between countries in terms of requirements for prior qualifications are smallest at the tertiary education level. Here too, however, prior qualifications are necessary to a greater extent in the countries of central and eastern Europe, together with Belgium in Norway – approximately 90% of respondents had to meet this requirement. In the cases of Austria, England, Scotland and Ireland, it appears that prior qualifications at the ISCED 5 level are slightly less necessary.

Entrance examinations (including interviews) as part of procedures for enrolment in a study programme are much rarer among educational institutions, while their use varies more from country to country. Thus at the lowest level we see that in Austria and Russia entrance examinations are more common than average (35%), with 60–70% of respondents reporting that they were required to sit entrance examinations. On the other hand, in Belgium, Scotland, England, Hungary and Bulgaria, entrance examinations are only mentioned as a condition for admission by 10–20% of adults. In Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Norway, entrance examinations of some kind are requested in the case of 37–46% of adult participants. Entrance examinations are more common at ISCED 3–5, with the result that differences between individual countries get smaller the higher we go up the education scale. In the Czech Republic, Russia, Ireland, Scotland and Estonia, roughly 50–60% of all adults at ISCED level 3 report that they had to sit an entrance examination when applying for a programme. The results differ significantly in Hungary and Bulgaria, where just 7–13 % of adult participants identify an entrance test as one of the entrance requirements. At ISCED level 4, entrance examinations are more common for respondents in Scotland, Ireland, Russia, Estonia, Lithuania and England (63–77%), and significantly less common in the

case of Hungary, Austria, Belgium, Norway and Slovenia (12–27%). In the case of entrance to the highest level of education (ISCED 5), the entrance examination is an important selective measure for students in Russia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Scotland – 63–86% of respondents indicated that they had taken an entrance test. Only 20% of respondents in Belgium and Norway state that they sat such a test before being accepted into an educational programme.

Below we shall also look at whether after re–entering the formal education system participants were entitled to validation of specific parts of the educational or study programme on the basis of knowledge acquired through relevant life or work experience (Table 8–3). We were interested in finding out to what extent respondents were exempted from completing a subject or part of a programme on the basis of a prior certificate/diploma or confirmation of completed course units (APL – Accreditation of Prior Learning) and to what extent on the basis of work and life experience (APEL – Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning).

Table 8–3 Accreditation of prior learning (APL) and prior experiential learning (APEL) by ISCED level and country, %

	ISCED 1–2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5–6	ISCED 5–6	TOTAL	ISCED 1–2	ISCED 3	ISCED 4	ISCED 5–6	TOTAL
	APL	APEL	APL	APEL	APL	APEL	APL	APEL	APL	APEL
Austria	29.6	12.5	60.6	13.5	68.1	22.4	48.5	40.3	51.7	22.2
Belgium FL	2.7	1.1	16.2	9.2	20.2	5.2	42.7	10.5	20.5	6.5
Bulgaria	40.0	6.3	17.6	9.7	9.3	5.6	21.8	4.7	22.2	6.6
Czech Rep.*			–	0.0			–	0.0	–	0.0
England	11.4	6.9	10.2	7.6	18.6	8.3	10.1	13.2	12.6	9.0
Estonia	36.4	22.3	39.4	20.3	31.8	20.1	27.0	16.4	33.7	19.8
Hungary	5.7	5.2	9.8	4.1	16.0	7.1	23.3	22.1	13.7	9.6
Ireland	0.6	3.4	10.5	13.8	13.3	18.3	13.4	6.7	9.5	10.6
Lithuania	16.3	8.8	23.1	13.9	22.5	25.2	47.9	19.5	27.5	16.9
Norway**	60.0	–	67.3	–	66.7	–	91.7	–	71.4	–
Russia	4.3	15.7	9.2	12.9	9.3	22.5	26.8	22.8	12.4	18.5
Scotland	3.1	4.2	6.1	10.2	7.0	3.3	12.6	12.4	7.2	7.5
Slovenia	37.6	12.2	60.9	12.0	42.9	8.8	19.5	23.5	40.2	14.1
TOTAL	20.6	9.0	27.6	10.6	27.1	13.3	32.1	16.0		

*In the Czech Republic adult learners were not asked about APL
**In the Norwegian education system there is no distinction between APL and APEL, both are regarded as "real competences"
Source: Boeren et al. 2011.

As expected, the figures show that accreditation of prior learning (APL, required diploma or certificate) is more widespread than accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL). The results clearly show that the

system of validation of non–formally and experientially acquired knowledge is most developed in Norway. This applies for both APL and APEL at all levels of education. The Norwegians make no distinction between APL and APEL and instead talk about "real competences". Thus 60% of adults following elementary or secondary education programmes in Norway received approval for the validation of some parts of the programme on the basis of prior learning and life experience. In Bulgaria, Slovenia, Estonia and Austria, specific exemptions on the basis of prior learning (APL) were recognised for 30–40% of participants at ISCED levels 1–2, while exemptions on the basis of prior experiential learning were recognised for 6–22% of participants. In Lithuania the figures were 16% APL and 9% APEL, while in England they were 11% APL and 7% APEL.

Quite a few of the countries in our sample come close to Norway's results at the middle levels of education (ISCED 3 and 4) in terms of accreditation of prior (experiential) learning. Thus at ISCED level 3, in comparison to the 67% in Norway, 61% of participants in Slovenia and Austria likewise reported validation of parts of a programme on the basis of prior learning. The next 12–14% of students in Slovenia and Austria were exempted on the basis of prior life and/or work experience. The level of accreditation is also slightly above average in Estonia (39% compared to the average of 25%); 20% of participants also report validation on the basis of APEL (average 9%). Slovenia, Estonia and Austria particularly stand out in terms of APL at ISCED level 4. In Lithuania, Belgium and England results are close to the average. In Ireland, Estonia, Austria, Russia and Lithuania, around 20% of those studying at ISCED level 4 report the accreditation of non–formal learning. Norway stands out above all at the highest level of education, with more than 90% of adults having specific parts of a programme recognised on the basis of prior experience.

Results of qualitative research

The data presented in this section come from the fifth subproject (SP5) of the LLL2010 research project, which focused on the institutional aspects of lifelong learning and is based on interviews with adult education institutions (vocational, technical, higher) and the public administration, above all that part of it which affects education policy as a whole and, in particular, adult education policy (Downes 2011). This study focuses in particular on adults enrolled in formal and non–formal education and observes them from various viewpoints: national strategies, vulnerable groups, institutions of formal and non–formal education and

opinions of those who create (adult) education policy. Among the research goals of this project was the identification of the main obstacles to the establishment of a system of accreditation of prior non–formal learning and accreditation of life and work experiences, in order to help broaden access to the education system for adults.

Methodology

The interviewees who took part in the study were selected according to predetermined criteria: organisations of formal and non–formal education at all levels of the education system and education in prisons, represented by senior and middle management. The interviews included representatives of adult education centres, secondary schools, higher vocational education and professional and academic higher education. We also considered opportunities for education in prisons as a special target group, and the interviewees included a responsible staff member and a professional in the field of the resocialisation of prisoners from one of Slovenia's prisons. The research, which involved the participation of 10 countries, consisted of 196 interviews in 83 institutions (Downes 2011, 61–62). The interviews took place in spring 2009.

Results

The interviews with the participants in the research revealed numerous obstacles that can have an effect at the systemic, institutional or individual level (Downes 2011). Presented below are some typical examples that were common to all participating countries.

In Slovenia an interviewee from a higher vocational school emphasised, in connection with the validation of non–formal learning, the importance of demonstrability of knowledge acquired in a non–formal or informal manner. The school prefers to validate what can be "proved by a piece of paper" and is certified by an institution, be it a university faculty or a school. They have more reservations when it comes to recognising non–formal learning because no standardised certificates are available: "[...] *we cannot recognise a certificate whose basis we do not know* [...]" (Ivančič et al. 2010).

They also make exceptions, above all as regards work placements and knowledge and skills that are the consequence of extensive work experience:

"Someone is a computer expert, [...] has no formal education, is a technician who works with computers and knows more than many of us

do, and he just does a test and then the lecturer says 'OK, you know it, […] you don't need to do the exam, I'll credit you the exam.' There has to be some basis, [...]" he has to prove himself [...]" (ibid.).

The obstacles to the recognition of prior learning highlighted in the Bulgarian national report relate to the fluctuation of quality of non–formal education between different educational institutions. An important factor in preventing the formation of a mechanism for the accreditation of non–formal education and prior work experience is the difference in criteria at the institutional level: "[…] people attend different courses at different places, but the quality of the training is not always good" (Boyadjieva etc. 2010).

The issue of guaranteeing the quality of education programmes, particularly in the case of private institutions, is also a prime concern in Estonia. A representative of the Ministry of Education and Research in Estonia explained that the poor quality of programmes – often in the private sector – makes it more difficult to equate the quality of knowledge that is acquired informally:

"One thing that we do not yet have in Estonia is the recognition of prior studies and work experience when admitting students (as is done in several Nordic countries). In Estonia prior studies can only be used (to obtain credits) after admission. It is not permitted to use prior studies during the admission process. I am one person who is against it. The reason is that our higher education network is very weak. Weak educational institutions are obviously interested in attracting more students and may therefore give up quality standards" (Tamm and Saar 2010).

For an adult, or for a full–time student who has been in employment, the lecturer may submit a request to the faculty committee to excuse them from individual examinations. The student must submit to the committee proofs and documentation of knowledge attained in another education programme (school certificate, report or similar). The committee reviews and assesses the submitted documentation and decides whether the student should be fully or partly excused from the examination.

A difficulty apparent in several reports is the lack of instructions and procedures on how to validate such knowledge. An interviewee from a (private) higher technical school in Slovenia explained that her school had developed its own procedure for the evaluation of its students' prior learning.

"[I]n the case of non–formally acquired knowledge, I, as the school principal […] help the individual, […] see how he or she can demonstrate

this knowledge, what is needed – since many people have done something in their lives without even realising it, we don't realise in what ways we have acquired knowledge. To give a concrete example: someone has been working as a computer programmer for 15 years and would now like to be credited with an exam in computer programming. So we sit down and talk about what programming language he or she has used, and the confirmation of the employer, and in such cases we always include the teacher of the subject concerned, and then the teacher establishes the candidate's prior knowledge, with the help of an interview or via some short project" (Ivančič etc. 2010).

On the basis of this procedure, many students have been exempted from certain parts of a study programme. Accreditation of prior learning which can be demonstrated by means of formal certificates has long been the practice at the school, while the evaluation of non–formal learning is only just beginning. A study commission which includes the subject teacher and the school principal is responsible for the overall process. The problem of validating non–formally or informally acquired knowledge was also mentioned at this school. In the interview the principal drew attention to the problem of the lack of suitable tools to assess knowledge and skills which cannot be demonstrated by means of proofs.

Similar difficulties were experienced in other countries that took part in research. In the case of Lithuania it is clear that a major barrier to the recognition of prior learning is the absence of a legal framework for such recognition. In such a situation recognition is limited to qualifications acquired at other educational institutions (Taljunaite etc. 2010):

"...The weakness of non–formal education is a lack of lawful mechanism to formalise non–formal education. It is a weak side of law… We have no complete self–management. There are regulating documents how this should be solved. However, there is no acknowledgement for this non–formal education, it is not accepted…" (Taljunaite et al. 2010).

The main obstacles to the establishment of a system for recognising prior learning are, in the opinion of the interviewee, the absence of proofs able to show what a person has learnt in non–formal education, and providers who do not issue proofs or who issue proofs from which it is not possible to make out what knowledge is acquired. This problem could be overcome if institutions issued certification of the knowledge that an individual has acquired, while at the same time this would need to be supported by a framework that would systematically define what kinds of knowledge are recognised and in what way. This would lead to a

simplification of certification and evaluation and validation of knowledge between different institutions providing adult education programmes.

The interviews reveal quite a number of difficulties experienced by the countries participating in the research project with regard to the recognition of non–formal and informal learning. Difficulties at the *systemic level* include the absence of a legal framework and national strategic guidelines, and the need for regulatory frameworks to establish the quality of non–formal and private educational sectors. Among the obstacles that make recognising prior learning more difficult at the *institutional level*, the interviewees cited: resistance of the institution to this activity, a lack of information among education participants regarding the possibilities of recognition of prior learning, costs connected with procedures for recognising prior learning and related delays, a lack of criteria and institutional routes to recognising prior learning. An additional concern highlighted by participants in the research is that the special features of non–formal education will be lost through formalisation and adaptation to procedures for the recognition of prior learning.

The findings of the international research can be complemented by the results of studies carried out in Slovenia from which it can be established that recognition procedures are quite demanding for participants. The experiences of participants evident in the Slovene research "Participation of employees of small and medium–sized enterprises in formal education" (Ivančič, Mirčeva and Mohorčič Špolar 2008) show that it is difficult for an individual to formalise prior learning even when in possession of proofs from formal education, from another field of education. The evaluation carried out at Slovenia's national Institute for Vocational Education (Žnidarič et al. 2010) also showed that despite the existence of adequate legal regulation of procedures and methods for the validation of non–formal learning, as many as two–thirds of the educational organisations which responded to questions regarding the extent of recognition of non–formally acquired knowledge had not yet implemented such recognition. The most frequently quoted reason for non–implementation is a lack of interest on the part of students or adult participants in education (ibid., 46). Although the respondents state that they inform participants about these procedures, the "lack of interest" they identify is probably above all the consequence of inadequately informing participants about the possibilities to which they are legally entitled. Alongside a lack of information, which is undoubtedly a significant obstacle to put into effect the recognition of non–formally acquired knowledge, it is also worth mentioning the expressed need for clearer instructions or guidelines on the part of the legislator.

Conclusions

In the introduction we emphasised that education legislation (and also labour legislation) supports and encourages the recognition of non–formally acquired knowledge, but different studies and evaluations have shown that the system has not fully taken off in practice. While some European countries such as France, Norway and Portugal have a well–organised system for recognising prior learning (Hawley et al. 2010; Field et al., 2007), quite a number of countries included in the research highlighted the problems they encounter when it comes to recognising prior learning. The results of quantitative and qualitative analysis showed that irrespective of the level of education and the sphere (formal, non–formal) in which the institution operates, the recognition of prior learning is based above all on "solid" data – on what can be demonstrated by a "piece of paper" and confirmed by another educational institution, e.g. a school or university faculty – in this way excluding all other learning not acquired in an organised environment. This is, among other things, the consequence of the excessive fragmentation of normative arrangements and the methodological incompleteness of instruments of evaluation.

All the participants in the LLL2010 project highlighted the fact that the main obstacle to the recognition of prior non–formal and informal learning is the inadequate transparency and standardisation of procedures for validating previously acquired knowledge and skills. Despite some positive examples in the Slovenian environment (e.g. NVQs, language certificates, computer certificates, etc.), an improvement in the certification of non–formal knowledge would require the existence of national recommendations or inter–institutional agreements regarding proofs of knowledge and skills acquired in non–formal programmes. Another major problem is the level of information among participants. In many cases, participants are not even aware of the possibilities open to them of having their prior learning recognised. The activity of educational institutions should also be directed towards informing adults of this possibility. Some educational institutions already do this, while others are less active in this sphere. Increased demand for the recognition of prior learning would undoubtedly further encourage the addressing of issues in this field. Perhaps worth mentioning as a final obstacle are conceptions about what learning is and how and where knowledge and skills are (also) developed. All actors in the field of education should accept that knowledge can be acquired in various environments, of which the formal (school) environment is just one. Here we can also touch on the broader problem of the recognition of previously acquired knowledge which goes beyond the

sphere of education and also concerns employers, who still select employees above all on the basis of certificates and diplomas issued by educational institutions.

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CHAPTER NINE

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES AS SUPPORTERS OF VALIDATION OF NON–FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING[1]

KLARA SKUBIC ERMENC

Abstract

The chapter will explore the role of national qualifications frameworks in supporting validation of non–formal and informal learning. Special attention will be paid to the role of learning outcomes in these arrangements. Learning outcomes are increasingly seen as the main tool for achieving greater transparency, thus supporting validation of non–formal and informal learning. This assumption will be critically examined: in what way can learning outcomes as predefined sets of skills, knowledge claims and/or competences be a useful tool in recognising and validating new knowledge, the result of a person's creative and innovative powers that increases his or her competitiveness and adds value to his or her qualification. The relationship between standardised learning outcomes included in the national qualifications framework and validation will be examined. It is assumed that the way learning outcomes are conceptualised may influence validation of non–formal and informal learning: narrowly defined learning outcomes may not be able to accommodate a wide range of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside educational institutions.

Since conceptualisations of learning outcomes differ greatly among different European countries, these questions will be explored comparatively.

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A special focus, however, will be given to Slovenia, which has a centrally regulated approach to validation of non–formal learning. Slovenia has recently developed its own qualifications framework, which also aims to integrate the validation system but faces several obstacles. Some guidelines for the integration of the Slovenian qualifications framework and the validation system will be produced.

Keywords: European qualifications framework, national qualifications frameworks, learning outcomes, validation and recognition of non– standard learning outcomes, standards of knowledge

The concept and importance of qualifications frameworks

National qualifications frameworks

Qualifications frameworks are "political instruments that assist in comparing and interpreting learning outcomes" (Bohlinger 2011, 123). They are created by series of rules and principles that direct the development of a qualifications system, usually at the national level. They are therefore an instrument of the development of a qualifications system, for which reason Bjørnavold and Coles (2010) have described them as "classification with vision" (ibid. 7). This frequently cited phrase has been rephrased by Raffe (2011b) as "classification with prescription" (ibid. 88). Every framework – regardless of its type – is in fact tied to defined[2] procedures and criteria for the placement of qualifications, which every type of qualification and every individual qualification must observe if it is to be included in the framework. This is essential in order to ensure the quality and comparability of qualifications and of assessment and validation procedures (ibid. 88, 89). The establishment of a national framework causes a greater centralisation of the system, since with it comes an establishing of "rules for the administration and management of education across a national territory" (McBride 2010, 195). McBride explains:

The centralizing tendency may arise from the fact that placing qualifications in a framework requires material on qualifications and associated quality assurance to be coordinated, documented, and prepared

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[2] Procedures and criteria are either laid down in a special law governing the national framework or tied to sectoral legislation. Where the latter approach is taken, we talk more about a guiding function than a prescriptive function (CEDEFOP 2010a), although the effect is similar in both cases.

for reporting through a national authority. In some systems this may lead to a new centre of gravity in governance structures. (ibid.)

Because of their traditionally decentralised approach to the regulation of education, centralisation is experienced in particular in English–speaking countries, while in continental Europe its nature is changing (more on this in: Ermenc 2012).

Supranational qualifications frameworks

Qualifications frameworks are not a purely modern phenomenon. They first began to develop at the supranational level. In Europe we may trace their origins to the time of the establishing of the Economic Community with the 1975 Treaty of Rome (Medveš and Muršak 1993, Johnson ana Wolf 2009, Brockmann, Clarke and Winch 2011). Despite the constant application of the principle of subsidiarity, education has always played a relatively important role in European integration processes. Attention initially focused on vocational education and training, because of its direct connection with worker mobility. The question of the reciprocal recognition of vocational qualifications has therefore always been an area of common activity and also of numerous conflicts. First in the field of the regulated professions and then gradually more widely (above all on a sectoral basis), various directives have been adopted and instruments and initiatives designed to enable the mutual recognition of vocational qualifications and in this way support worker mobility throughout Europe. Perhaps the most important among them is the five–level scale of qualifications adopted in 1985 by the European Council (The European Five–level Framework… 1985, Bohlinger 2011, Medveš and Muršak 1993). All these efforts have only met with partial success because systems of vocational education and training in Europe are very diverse. The fundamental obstacle to the development of a comprehensive system of mutual recognition of qualifications has been that efforts have been based on the desire to harmonise education and vocational education programmes (Medveš and Muršak 1993, Johnson and Wolf 2009); or, as we usually say today, based on input. Harmonisation has furthermore been tied to a specific concept of recognition, "nostrification", under which an almost perfect correspondence is sought between qualifications from different national systems (Rauhvargers 2009, 111).

With the Treaty of Lisbon, mobility and education gained an even greater weight and importance in the European Community, which gave the European Council and the European Parliament a fresh impetus to seek a method for the mutual recognition of qualifications that would further

ease mobility of workers and the learning population. The experience that Europe had behind it (first at the EEC level and then at the EU level) demanded an innovative approach. The idea began to develop of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF), a framework that would not be a tool for the direct recognition of qualifications but that would establish a platform for the better mutual understanding of qualifications and in this way help the other mechanisms developing in the field of recognition. The inspiration for the EQF were the national qualifications frameworks that had begun to be developed towards the end of the 1980s in some English–speaking countries: England, Scotland, New Zealand, Australia and, a little later, South Africa (Young 2005). There are at least three important differences between earlier instruments and the EQF: (1) Following the model of the frameworks of the time (particularly the English one), the EQF abandoned the logic of input and replaced it with the logic of output (Méhaut and Winch 2012): systems of vocational education and training or qualifications systems differ too much from country to country, embedded as they are in different relationships between the state, the labour market and employers, for it to be possible or logical to unify them. This is the start of a paradigmatic shift towards learning outcomes which is characteristic of an ever–increasing number of countries and, consequently, of their national qualifications frameworks (CEDEFOP 2009, Ermenc and Mikulec 2011). (2) The second difference lies in the fact that the EQF is also understood as a mechanism for strengthening lifelong learning (and no longer merely for transferring vocational qualifications), for which reason it has tried to find connections between formal, non–formal and informal education and learning, between general, academic education and vocational education and training (Ermenc and Mikulec 2011), although precisely because of its development and function, it also transfers its vocational logic into the wider education system (Brockmann, Clarke and Winch 2011). (3) The third difference is that the EQF has linked itself to a changed view of the recognition of qualifications: the Lisbon Recognition Convention replaced the concept of nostrification with the concept of equivalence: in order for a qualification from a sending country to be recognised in a receiving country, it must be similar to the qualification in the receiving country in so far as it either enables access to the labour market in the receiving country or enables access to further education (Rauhvargers 2009, 111). The important thing, then, is what the holder of a qualification can do with it in another country, and it is therefore no longer as important to find exact similarity between the duration and place of education, learning content and other input elements as it is to seek similarities between the functions of qualifications.

The development of national qualifications frameworks

The EQF triggered the rapid development of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) in Europe. Other regions of the world have also developed their own meta–frameworks (e.g. SADCQF: a meta–framework developed by the countries of the Southern African region; CVQ: a meta–framework developed by Caribbean countries (EFT 2011)), a factor which is triggering the development of national frameworks throughout the world. At the start of 2013 national frameworks had been prepared or were in the process of preparation in 138 countries from every part of the world, while experts believe that at least ten new countries will have embarked on this process by the end of this year (Young and Allais 2013, 1). It is no surprise, then, that lively discussion of their importance and effects is taking place in current scholarly literature (Allais 2007a, b, c and 2011a, b, Allais, Raffe and Young 2009, Bohlinger 2011, Brockmann, Clarke and Winch 2008a and b, Brown 2011, Raffe 2011a and b, Young 2005 and 2011, Young and Allais 2013). Given the rapid pace of development of this instrument, directed by the governments of numerous countries, the question of the causes of such a boom naturally raises itself. Raffe (2011b, 89) attempts to answer this question by reviewing the formal objectives cited by the countries involved: from improving the comprehensibility of qualifications and their transparency, via unification of the overall qualifications system, to improving system quality and oversight, improving opportunities to obtain qualifications by various learning pathways, etc. Raffe is not entirely satisfied with this answer and shows that the main factor of development is actually

> "the logic of collective decision–making created by the actions of other countries and, in particular, by the introduction of meta–frameworks such as the EQF" (ibid. 90).

EU member states and other European countries develop national frameworks in connection with the European Qualifications Framework because they are afraid of being excluded from the European processes in the labour market; a framework helps those countries that attract foreign workers to understand the qualifications of the immigrant workforce, while it is in the interest of those countries that export labour to raise the competitive value of their workers. A similar logic also applies to the other meta–frameworks being developed by individual regions of the world (ibid.). Additionally, as S. Bohlinger (2011) points out:

> It seems likely that the ongoing reforms are not only concerned with actually improving the quality of education and training systems, but that they also provide governments with new planning and steering tools. Moreover, qualifications frameworks represent what is now almost a paradigmatic case of government intervention in a neo–liberal democracy: they are attempts to achieve greater central control, while at the same time giving individuals and institutions the feeling of greater freedom of choice. (ibid. 130)

A qualifications framework is therefore a tool by means of which governments are able to intervene strongly in the essence of education and qualifications systems, their fundamental purposes, their structure, and the opportunities that are open or closed to the population with regard to access to (valuable) qualifications. The power and importance of this tool – particularly from the point of view of the recognition of non–formally and informally acquired knowledge – are easier to understand if we take a closer look at the concept and logic of learning outcomes, as a central element of the modern qualifications framework.

Learning outcomes

The state plans and regulates the education system at three levels, intervening more at some levels and less at others depending on the nature of the system (this depends above all on the degree of (de)centralisation of the system. More on this in: Ermenc, 2012). The regulation by which the state ensures uniform quality of the system takes place at the input, process and output levels (cf. Medveš 2002).

The input level includes accreditation procedures and the setting of general and concrete educational goals and standards of knowledge; definition of the examinations system and the rules of assessment and advancement; the setting of general quality conditions for pedagogical work, standards, norms, teacher training, etc. At the process level the state can intervene in the prescription of the organisation of teaching (rules for the differentiation of learners), teaching materials, teaching methods, etc. The precise prescription of individual elements of the input and process levels is currently being phased out, since states no longer find them a suitable way to provide oversight of systems and ensure their quality. Generally speaking, prescription of the process level is today considered to have been superseded, since the level of professionalisation of the teaching profession is so high that decisions on teaching methods and didactic strategies are left to the professional autonomy of teachers and the school (Medveš 2002). A similar argument – the strengthening of the professional

autonomy of the teacher, the figure within the system who is best qualified to guide learners to high–quality learning outcomes – also brings a reduction in the regulation of some (not all!) elements of the input level. The most typical scenario is the transition from a subject–matter curriculum to a goals–based curriculum, which allow teachers and schools an independent choice of subject matter and pedagogical processes (Kroflič 1992, Kelly 1986, Eurypedia 2013).

The situation at the output level is different. Regulation at the output level is understood as regulation of the education system on the basis of the learning achievements of the population. We have already defined this more precisely as follows:

> The output level refers to: the regulation of and control over learning achievements. This level was traditionally less established, but increasing teachers' freedom at the process level automatically causes the reduction of freedom at the output level. If state authorities wish to influence and control the quality of the system, the delegation of decision–making at the input and process levels to lower levels brings about the enhancement of state control over actually achieved learning outcomes. (Ermenc 2012, 38)

Regulation at the output level also brings an important shift at the input level: it requires, in fact, a definition of standards of knowledge; to put it in more general terms: it requires a definition of intended learning outcomes. The definition of the latter enables the state to ensure the quality (and equity) of the system: via external assessment the state ascertains the quality of actually achieved learning outcomes, including the quality of the learning outcomes of vulnerable social groups, in this way strengthening the equity of the system at the level of learning achievements (cf. Kodelja 2006). On the basis of findings, the authorities then implement specific policy measures – this is the part of the "story" that we refer to as "evidence–based policy" (Kos Kecojević and Gaber 2011). The concept of learning outcomes is thus a concept that links the input and output levels of regulation of the system, which however is not entirely clear from the very general definition of the concept of learning outcomes as defined by the European Commission and disseminated by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), and also used in the Bologna process:

> "Learning outcomes have been defined as statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand, or be able to do at the end of a learning process" (EU 2011, 12).

Learning outcomes can therefore be understood as a concept that combines the two dimensions, the input and the output:

1) On the one hand this is an *input* concept which serves as a basis for all those modern curricula (syllabuses, catalogues of knowledge, examination catalogues, etc.) which wish to set out, in as comprehensible and transparent a manner as possible, what knowledge (skills, abilities and/or competences) an individual will acquire in the learning process and at what level of complexity and difficulty this knowledge will be. Different countries use different names for this dimension: standards of knowledge, (operational) learning objectives, intended learning achievements and – under the influence of the current "shift" to learning outcomes (CEDEFOP 2009) – even learning outcomes. Regardless of the term used, it involves preprepared *standardised*, objectivised (larger or smaller) units of knowledge, skills or abilities and/or competences, defined therefore in the sense of content, scope, difficulty level and complexity.

2) On the other hand learning outcomes are also an *output* concept relating to the *actually* achieved knowledge (competences) of the individual, to the content and scope of this knowledge, and to its quality, complexity and applicability. When this knowledge is also "measured" (tested, assessed and/or validated), it also becomes visible. According to the logic of criterion–based assessment it must be measured in terms of predefined learning outcomes. Before this, it is a purely subjective category. Only when it is measured does it gain objective value.

We have already discussed elsewhere (Ermenc 2012) the fact that the concept of learning outcomes has different meanings and functions in different systems. If we look at it in terms of type, a fundamental difference is evident between centralised and decentralised systems: in centralised systems – although today these are also in the process of decentralisation (Eurydice 2008) – learning outcomes are an increasingly present concept, where the input dimension prevails, as one of several input categories by which the state regulates the education system. Learning outcomes are a part of education programmes that are most commonly provided in formal forms of education with precisely defined rules of activity and assessment. This logic prevails in the majority of continental European countries. Brockmann, Clark and Winch (2008a)

explain it as follows: in centralised systems, learning outcomes are derived from educational aims, which provide:

> the general purposes for which education is being provided, whether this be for liberal, vocational or civic reasons or a mixture of all of these. By their nature, aims, when they are stated, are of quite a high degree of generality: for example, to promote autonomy, employability, civic responsibility. Within such general statements, curriculum designers are able to develop the content in terms of knowledge, skill, understanding, attitudes, and virtues that the student is expected to acquire or develop in order to fulfil. (ibid. 101)

In decentralised systems (for the most part in English–speaking countries), learning outcomes have a slightly different meaning and perhaps an even more important role. If we take as an example the United Kingdom, a model case of a country with a decentralised education system, up until the 1980s the state left decisions on the majority of input and process elements to local authorities and schools. This caused greater disparity in the quality of learning achievements in the country than is typical of centralised systems, which, through a precise definition of input and process elements, ensured more uniform quality throughout the country (Archer 1979, Green 1990). Nevertheless, authors who come from the English–speaking environment observe that in these countries too there has been a radical break from tradition at the input level (Young 2005, Allais 2007a and b). The basic characteristic of the concept of LOs is that they are "not tied to any specific learning and teaching programme" (Allais, Raffe and Young 2009, 2). According to Brockmann, Clarke and Winch (2008 a), learning outcomes are devised "without an explicit reference point, whether the curricula or labour market activities" and "are detached from any specific curriculum or pedagogical practice" (ibid. 101).

Even in this case, learning outcomes are still an input category, only that now they are *stand–alone* elements and no longer embedded in the formal school system, education programmes and traditional pedagogical practices. And what about the output dimension? From the point of view of the decentralised system this is extremely important, since it is only via this dimension that the state can really establish uniform quality: if the state no longer decides on such traditionally key elements as learning content and the organisation of the pedagogical process, if it allows diverse providers to carry out pedagogical activities and if it gives citizens the opportunity to choose their own pathway to their goal, then it is clear

that it must assume control of the quality of learning outcomes – in other words of the actual achievements of the learning population.

Learning outcomes which are embedded in the school system and pedagogical practice follow pedagogical logic more closely: in terms of content they derive from more general educational objectives and demand responsibility from schools and teachers in the sense of support for all learners in the achievement of key learning outcomes at at least a minimum level. They usually have the form of standards of knowledge (cf. Brockmann, Clarke and Winch 2009). The school is responsible for the broader development of the learner. It is responsible for ensuring that via his or her involvement in a high–quality pedagogical process he or she reaches set goals.

Learning outcomes as stand–alone elements, on the other hand, are more subject to economic logic: in terms of content they derive from economic objectives and are also closer to the direct needs of the market. They can take the form of occupational standards (Brockmann, Clarke and Winch 2009, 103, McBride and Keevy 2010, 195). Economic objectives are placed in the foreground by global and national actors (CEDEFOP 2010, Lundgren 2011, Daun 2011, Lawn, Rinne and Grek 2011), which link them to the individual's responsibility for his or her own learning and education. If learners acquire their knowledge (skills, competences) in a school or other educational institution, accountability for results of course also lies on the side of the provider. The provider's accountability lies above all in its ability to demonstrate it (Možina 2011), in other words in the ability of the provider to prove to all stakeholders the quality of its work and results. The key responsibility, however, as critics of the concept of lifelong learning also point out (Kump 2009, Kelava 2012), is shifted onto the shoulders of individuals, who must be capable not only of assessing their own learning needs, but also of selecting economically and socially relevant learning outcomes and choosing an appropriate environment in which to obtain them.

Learning outcomes as a point of contact between the framework and the system for recognising the results of non–formal and informal learning

In a situation in which learning outcomes are becoming the starting point for policies in school education and formal education systems, this is a great opportunity for policies designed to promote non–formal and informal learning. All three dimensions of the concept of lifelong learning find a common denominator: learning outcomes. But since learning

outcomes only gain their true meaning when they are assessed and recognised, planning them is impossible unless assessment is taken into account. Without assessment it is not possible to understand learning outcomes either in the school context or in any other context. Learning outcomes are therefore also the fundamental building block of national qualifications frameworks, since qualifications (and credits) are always the consequence of the formal validation and recognition of learning outcomes. Breaking down the concept of learning outcomes into its input and output dimensions, thereby establishing a relationship between expected and achieved learning outcomes, also allows us to introduce the element of assessment to the concept. Between expected and achieved outcomes there is always assessment and validation, in other words establishing congruity between the expected and the achieved and the quality of the achieved.

The purposes of assessment of course differ; assessment which via validation leads to recognition of learning outcomes is not necessarily always and everywhere present, not even in the context of non–formal and informal learning. When the purpose of assessment is the dissemination and enhancement of knowledge, or the professional and personal development of the individual, we talk about its *formative* function and, more broadly, about a formative approach to identifying and evaluating knowledge, skills and competences (Technical Criteria… 2011, 7):

> The formative approach is conceived as a decentralised and wide–ranging instrument for providing feedback and support in further learning, and avoids a connection with the awarding of formal qualifications. The primary purpose of formative assessment is to enable learners to broaden and deepen their learning. Through this approach, participants in learning should obtain feedback that will enable them to improve the learning process and, by indicating the strengths and weaknesses of their learning, provide a basis for personal or professional development. (ibid. 7)

As an approach that avoids the awarding of formal qualifications, it is not directly connected to the national qualifications framework, although the framework can play an important role in it (as we shall try to show below). It does of course play a key role in another approach to assessment, known as the *summative* approach.

> In the summative approach, the purpose or result of the process of evaluation and testing non–formally acquired knowledge in order to obtain a formally recognised qualification and a (state–approved) certificate. Although the process of recognising knowledge in non–formal and informal education is designed to be more sensitive to the needs of the

individual, for reasons of status and trust it is vital that the summative
elements of recognition are based on the (state–approved) standards of
knowledge and skills that are used in assessment in formal education. (ibid.
7, 8)

The point of contact between the qualifications framework and the
system of recognising non–formally and informally acquired knowledge is
now perfectly clear: it consists of clearly defined intended learning
outcomes – standardised units of learning/skills/competences defined in
terms of content, breadth, depth, complexity and level of difficulty. This
allows us to draw the following conclusion: if qualifications are defined
through learning outcomes, it is possible, first, to place them at the
appropriate level of the qualifications framework with regard to predefined
level descriptors, and, secondly, to assess them independently of the
pathway by which they were obtained.

This means that when the competent body assesses and recognises an
individual's learning outcomes, it is also possible to establish what
qualification level his or her achievements correspond to. The system of
national vocational qualifications (NVQ) in Slovenia functions according
to the principle described above. When an adult decides to try and obtain
recognition for his or her vocational competences, he or she participates in
an established and standardised system of assessment and validation via
the competent bodies. If the candidate successfully completes the procedures,
he or she obtains a document – a national vocational qualification – which
increases his or her employability and competitiveness in the labour market
(for more on this see: ReferNet 2012). Once the Slovenian qualifications
framework has been formally adopted,[3] it will be possible to establish
what qualification level a specific national vocational qualification
corresponds to, and what this means in relation to other qualifications in
the Slovenian qualifications system. Understanding an individual
qualification and its function will therefore improve, and this will also
help improve the "negotiating base" of social partners when setting criteria
for promotion at work and in pay negotiations, and with regard to
opportunities for further and continuing education.

The same logic also applies (or should apply) to all other qualifications,
including the educational qualifications that are included in the national
framework and based on learning outcomes.[4] This, however, is only

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[3] At the time of writing this chapter this has been prepared and will come into force
following the adoption of the Slovenian Qualifications Framework Act.
[4] It should be pointed out here that learning outcomes are not only those elements
of qualifications (or syllabuses!) that bear this name: it is not so much the choice of

possible if certain other conditions are met: an established register of qualifications, defined learning outcomes and systemically determined procedures for the assessment, evaluation and recognition of those learning outcomes acquired via non–typical learning pathways. Unless these conditions are met, not even a qualifications framework has a true function for the purposes of recognising non–formally and informally acquired learning outcomes.

The pitfalls of separating learning outcomes from input elements and the problem of recognising non–standard learning outcomes

Stand–alone learning outcomes and their transparency (or lack of it)

The basic assumption of learning outcomes says that it is possible "to capture the essence of what qualification or learning experience represents" (Allais 2011b, 146), and that in this way it will be possible to

> capture a "sameness", or disclose an essence which is or could be achieved through a variety of different curricula and learning experiences, as well as learning experiences beyond formally taught learning programmes. It is because of this notion of "sameness" that learning outcomes can, it is believed or asserted, "cross boundaries"– between nation states, different parts of education and training systems, or between education programmes and life (especially work) experiences. Related to this, outcomes–based qualifications frameworks are often introduced as an integral component of quality assurance systems. The idea is that national regulatory bodies will be able to measure programmes against the outcomes, and employers and educational institutions, whether at home or in other countries, will then have a good sense of what it is that the bearer of a qualification is competent to do. (ibid. 147)

The definition of learning outcomes should enable the transparency of qualifications (which is key from the point of view of qualifications frameworks) and also the recognition of learning outcomes acquired outside formal education. Even back in the 1990s, however, authors (Hyland 1994, Wolf 1995) were warning that this is a problematic

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words but the form and function that are important. In the Slovenian context we usually talk about standards of knowledge (and in the context of the NVQ system about occupational standards).

approach, since a truly transparent qualification would need to contain a large number of very precisely defined learning outcomes, which however would lead to their trivialisation and a "never–ending spiral of specification" (Wolf 1995, 55). These warnings have proved justified: we are familiar with the case of the first national vocational qualifications in the United Kingdom (Brown 2011), while the more recent case of South Africa is well documented (Allais 2007a, b, c, 2011a, b and 2013). Both these countries have at least partially eliminated the defect by adding a content dimension to learning outcomes expressed through descriptions of skills and tasks. Knowledge, in fact, "cannot be 'mapped' onto learning outcomes, and needs to be considered in its own right" (Allais 2011, 146). Knowledge is formed in the context of clearly demarcated disciplines or

> "in interaction between 'theory' (defined here as discipline–based knowledge) and 'practice' – 'practice' here includes 'fields of practice' as diverse as arts and culture, manufacturing and services" (Young 2011, 98).

Only people who have already obtained a specific qualification can fully understand this qualification. Those who merely want to obtain a qualification simply cannot do this. As Young (2011) explains:

> What you should know as someone who is qualified cannot be explained to any unqualified person by giving them a list of learning outcomes. What is involved in acquiring any valuable skill or knowledge can only be known in the most general way by the potential learner or user. […] The basis of the relationship between a beginning learner and what she or he want to know or be able to do at the end of the course is not that of a buyer […]; it is TRUST – trust in the specialist knowledge of the teacher and the school or college who have designed the curriculum leading to the qualification. (Young 2011, 97)

Because of considerations of this kind, and as a result of negative experiences, experts today advise countries to be extremely careful when defining learning outcomes: above all, the content dimension should always be present, and learning outcomes should be defined in a more holistic manner. Granulation should be avoided (more in e.g. CEDEFOP 2010).

Validation and recognition
of non–standard learning outcomes

Another question that raises itself is whether (and how) the validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired via non–formal and informal pathways, without their previous standardisation, is actually possible. As pointed out by Kelava (2012, 49–50), non–formal and informal learning have a non–standardised and individual character, which is their great distinction. People learn a great deal through their work (and other activities), which they complement with various forms of education. They use what they have learned in unique and innovative ways to address occupational challenges and, in this way, create new (sometimes very specialised) knowledge and develop highly specialised (new) skills. This kind of knowledge has a great advantage – companies that employ and integrate such individuals are more innovative, competitive and financially successful. If at this point we ignore the humanistic aspect of this question, it is, as Kelava puts it, entirely illogical and counter–productive even from the economic point of view to completely formalise, systematise and enframe this field (ibid. 50). In her view, it is necessary to maintain a broader understanding of validation and recognition

> "so that it can also be used outside the context of prepreared standards, and open enough that no type of knowledge and no individual with specific needs for confirmation of his or her knowledge is excluded from it on an a priori basis" (ibid. 49).

How? As proposed by the Recommendations on the validation of non–formal and informal learning (Council of the European Union 2012), it is important to distinguish four phases: the identification, documentation, assessment and certification of learning outcomes acquired through non–formal and informal learning. It should be possible for the individual, with regard to his or her needs, to participate in any of these phases separately or in combination with other phases. Some individuals will above all want to be able to demonstrate their achievements and document them, since this will make it easier for them to choose further pathways of learning and professional realisation. It may be that obtaining a formal certificate is not their primary objective. The realisation of such an objective requires the establishment of a comprehensive and flexible system for the validation of learning outcomes acquired through non–formal and informal learning, where a key role is played by adequate support and guidance for the individual in the phase of identifying and documenting

knowledge. In Slovenia the summative approach is predominant, via the NVQ system, while the formative function is still rather neglected.

As Kelava (2012) points out, however:

> it is important to establish services that can accept any and every application for validation from an individual, regarding (vertically and horizontally) all possible fields (the various sectors of the economy and also "hobby" fields), and on this basis call on a qualified panel, a kind of jury, to study an individual case and make a decision on the basis of the submitted documents or, if necessary, the knowledge, skills or competences demonstrated, and, using its own judgement and professional autonomy, decide whether or not to award a certificate. (ibid. 349)

The above proposal may at first glance appear problematic, since it gives the impression of arbitrariness and subjectivity, both from the point of view of the criteria for the selection of such panels, and from the point of view of the criteria by which the panel will make its judgement. The question of trust, which we have already mentioned above, is also raised here: trust is based above all on the holders of knowledge. From this point of view, the evaluation of the learning achievements of an individual on the part of qualified people may be a suitable complement to the more technically oriented approaches based on the concept of learning outcomes. However, even qualified panels need guidelines and tools to help them in their evaluation and additionally legitimise their decisions. Let us now try, on the basis of analysis of the key components of a qualifications framework, to establish what these frameworks could be.

Concluding reflection: how can a qualifications framework help with the validation of non–standardised learning outcomes? The case of Slovenia

Modern qualifications frameworks contain three basic components: qualification levels are defined, descriptors of learning outcomes are drawn up, and a methodology is defined for describing qualifications and placing them in the framework. Some qualifications frameworks also include a credit system. The determination of the number of levels is affected by reflection on the purpose of the framework, which is also connected with the structure of the education system in the country, while in Europe those frameworks that have appeared or are appearing as an effect of the introduction of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) are also affected by the number of levels in the European framework (CEDEFOP 2013). In Slovenia the national framework (SQF)

will include all levels of the education system; the basic function of the framework is to establish a more transparent system with clearly defined relationships between qualifications, and therefore ten qualification levels are planned. Level descriptors are also created according to the same logic: they reflect the basic characteristics of existing qualifications, or the characteristics that should be introduced to qualifications (if the framework has more of a reforming purpose), while on the other hand the majority of frameworks are also modelled on the EQF descriptors.

Each descriptor sets out the fundamental characteristics of learning outcomes at an individual qualification level and is divided into several categories. Following the EQF model, these categories are most often: knowledge, skills and competences (as is the case in Slovenia), but other solutions also exist (CEDEFOP 2013). Germany, for example has placed the nationally specific "competence of action" (*Handlunsgskompetenz*) at the centre of development of its framework, while Poland devotes a special place in its framework to social competence, which includes identity (participation, responsibility), cooperation (teamwork, leadership qualities), responsibility (actions of the individual and the group) and evaluation (CEDEFOP 2013b). Despite some differences, descriptors have in common the fact that they try to cover the aims of education and learning, which today for the most part derive from pragmatic and functional concepts of knowledge. This is why competences occupy a central place among them. In order to make it possible to include the most diverse qualifications in frameworks, descriptors are written at a general level, where the key factor is their gradation by difficulty and complexity: descriptors of learning outcomes at lower levels point to elementary knowledge, mastery of basic skills and the ability to deal with simple situations in a guided context. They are written in such a way that it is possible to recognise them both in school learning[5] and the school context and from the point of view of use in the workplace. Additionally, the planners of frameworks also prepare more or less prescriptive methodologies of inclusion and methodologies for the description of qualifications, which is particularly necessary for the preparation of the register of qualifications that usually accompanies the framework.

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[5] In some countries they are harder to recognise in school learning, for example in Germany, which has based its framework on the concept of *Handlungskompetenz*, a concept which has developed in the dual system of vocational education and does not exist in other segments of the system. This causes Germany some difficulties when incorporating educational qualifications into its framework and triggers debates – welcome ones in our opinion – about parity of esteem between different qualifications.

Let us try and imagine, in the case of Slovenia (Mikulec and Ermenc 2013), what opportunities these instruments could offer qualified panels[6] within the system of validation of learning outcomes acquired through non–formal and informal learning.

The SQF contains learning outcomes descriptors that are divided into three categories. See Table 9–1.

Table 9–1 Learning outcomes descriptors (SQF).

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCES
Is the result of learning and the assimilation of concepts, principles, theories and practices. Acquisition of knowledge takes place in various settings: in the educational process, at work and in the context of private and social life.	*In the context of the national qualifications framework this means cognitive skills (e.g. the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and/or practical skills (e.g. manual, creative skills, use of materials, tools and instruments).*	*Relate to the ability to use and integrate knowledge and skills in educational, professional and personal situations. We distinguish between generic and vocationally specific competences.*

Source: Referencing the Slovenian Qualifications Framework... 2013.

The definitions of all three categories provide guidance for the person carrying out the assessment when it comes to defining the elements of assessment, which are selected with regard to the nature of the learning outcome being assessed, for example: the candidate's grasp of theoretical knowledge, cognitive or practical skills, or various (professional) competences. It is not necessary for the individual to demonstrate learning outcomes in all three categories; such an approach would have an extremely counter–productive effect on the desired preservation of the flexibility of the system. Even in the case of formal qualifications, this equating of categories is not possible, and is unnecessary: in elementary and general secondary education, there is of course a greater emphasis on the development of knowledge and skills, while in vocational and higher education more emphasis is usually placed on competences. It is not, therefore, a question of learning outcomes being identical, but of their equivalence in terms of their complexity and level of difficulty.

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[6] We believe that such panels make sense at several levels: at the company level, at the level of educational institutions, and at the state level – depending on the candidate's goal and the company's career development policy or the state's lifelong learning policy.

Table 9–2 Knowledge, skills and competences in Level 3 and Level 4 of Slovenian Qualifications Framework.

	Knowledge	Skills	Competences
Level 3	Predominantly practical, life– and vocationally relevant knowledge with some theoretical basis, acquired primarily through the study of examples, imitation and practice in the context of a specific discipline.	Basic literacy and practical skills on a limited scale including the use of appropriate tools, methods and materials. Application of known solutions to resolve predictable problems on a limited scale. Ability to carry out transparent and standardised tasks.	Ability to acquire new knowledge and skills in a structured context with appropriate guidance. Ability to operate with limited autonomy {in a predictable and structured context on the basis of simple verbal or written instructions.
Level 4	Predominantly vocational knowledge supplemented by knowledge of theoretical principles, particularly those from the relevant discipline. The study of examples and the integration and application of knowledge take precedence over the principles of systematic scientific organisation.	Application of knowledge to resolve various tasks and problems, including less typical situations. Wide–ranging and specialised skills in relation to the area of operation, including the use of appropriate tools, methods, different technological procedures and materials. Ability to carry out relatively transparent, less standardised tasks.	Ability to operate in a familiar and less familiar setting with a greater degree of responsibility and autonomy. Taking responsibility for characteristics and quality of products/services connected with work tasks or processes. Taking responsibility for own learning. Acquisition of new knowledge and skills in a supervised environment. This level is characterised by a certain business orientation and the ability to organise and work in teams.

Source: Referencing the Slovenian Qualifications Framework... 2013.

When the assessor has established, through an interview with the candidate, what categories of learning outcomes are being identified, assessed or validated, he or she is then able to describe this knowledge, skills or competences on the appropriate form. Descriptions of formal qualifications (see Register of Qualifications… n.d.) can be helpful here. The next step is to establish the levels of difficulty and complexity (i.e. the

qualification levels) to which these outcomes correspond: they may all be at the same level, or they may not.

The assessor may find, for example, that the candidate's results mainly corresponds to qualification level 4, or perhaps that the candidate's knowledge is level 3 but his or her skills are level 4. (See Table 9–2.) Since the SQF is referenced to the EQF, the assessor can also establish the level of achievements in terms of the EQF and in this way contribute to the transparency of the qualification, including from the point of view of international mobility.

If necessary, the assessor can establish what learning outcomes are compatible with learning outcomes in formal qualifications: what outcomes, with what scope and at what quality level. The assessor is helped here by the register of qualifications and/or a review of curriculum documents, occupational standards, etc.

The document prepared by the panel on this basis can in itself be the end result of validation or assessment, in cases involving, for example, the formative functions of valuing, or career and salary advancement in a company. On the other hand, it can be an intermediate result that makes it easier to validate learning outcomes for the purpose of further education or to validate complete qualifications.

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CHAPTER TEN

(RECOGNITION OF) NON–FORMAL LEARNING: BEYOND FORMAL EDUCATION?

POLONA KELAVA

Abstract

In this paper we will explore the "range" or scope of non–formal learning. Does non–formal learning merely happen alongside learning in formal contexts, or does it have significant advantages compared to formal education? It can be shown that tools which first presume the existence of knowledge acquired through non–formal learning (predominantly in the field of vocational education and training) and then offer the possibility of recognising it are in fact more adapted to the needs and interests of employers than to those of employees. An example of such a tool is national vocational qualifications. It will be argued that some of the tools designed for the recognition of non–formal learning are somewhat limited and not adequately regulated; accordingly, non–formal learning is not given the consideration it deserves. We will offer some answers to the question of non–formal learning (along with its outcomes and its possible recognition) as a different, less neoliberalist tool, which instead of serving the economy contributes to the greater (educational and social) independence of the individual.

Key words: non–formal knowledge, recognition of non–formal learning, vocational education and training, adult education, neoliberalism

Introduction

When we talk about non–formal knowledge we cannot avoid talking about the recognition of non–formal learning and the tools that enable this recognition. We shall therefore focus above all on non–formal knowledge that relates to the field of vocational education and training (VET) and/or

adult education and is subject to a certification procedure. We shall attempt to identify the purposes for which tools for the recognition of non–formal learning are introduced (for example national vocational qualifications – NVQs – which we will describe in more detail below, and others) and discover how and to what extent they actually affect the individual and his or her position in education and the sphere of work. We shall look at how the recognition of knowledge acquired through non–formal learning is regulated in Slovenia (and how this may be compared with arrangements in other countries that have NVQs, including the United Kingdom, which has a similar system of national vocational qualifications), and what documents regulate this field. We shall summarise the findings of studies designed to assess the ways in which the recognition of non–formal learning is regulated (in the concrete case of Slovenia) and, last but not least, establish whether (and to what extent) there is a risk that the system for recognising non–formal learning exists more for the benefit of employers than those of employees. Having done this, it will also be possible to consider and critically evaluate the identified weaknesses of the system and propose improvements in the context of other countries which have similar approaches to recognition (recognition models)[1], or which intend to introduce them. In the light of our findings we shall indicate what factors will need to be taken into account in order to ensure that every system for recognising non–formal learning actually serves the needs of the individuals concerned.

In order to avoid possible confusion, we shall begin by clarifying some of the fundamental terms that we are going to use in the article.

In order to establish the differences between "formal", "non–formal" and "informal" learning, we have used the definitions contained in the 2008 publication *Terminology of European education and training policy. A selection of 100 key terms*, which also recapitulates the previously agreed terminology from the glossaries of relevant institutions, which we cite alongside each definition.

> Formal learning is "learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

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[1] Bjørnåvold's study classifies countries into five groups in the light of the common features of their systems for the recognition of non–formal and informal learning (Bjørnåvold 2002, 27), as will be explained further on.

It typically leads to validation and certification" (Terminology… 2008, 85, source: Cedefop[2] 2004).

Non–formal learning is "learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non–formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view" (*Terminology*… 2008, 133, source: Cedefop 2004). This definition is accompanied by two comments: (1) non–formal learning outcomes may be validated and lead to certification, (2) non–formal learning is sometimes described as semi–structured learning. (ibid.)

Informal learning is "learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective" (*Terminology*… 2008, 40, source: Cedefop 2004). This definition is also accompanied by comments that additionally clarify the term: (1) informal learning outcomes do not usually lead to certification but may be validated and certified in the framework of recognition of prior learning schemes, (2) informal learning is also referred to as experiential or incidental/random learning (ibid.).

It is, of course, possible to raise issues about these expressions, but since we will be concentrating on the recognition of non–formally and informally acquired knowledge and the dimensions of such knowledge, this is not relevant here.

In this article we shall be looking predominantly at the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non–formal and informal learning, above all for the needs of a job or occupation, and at the effects that this can have on the individual. Once we have defined learning in non–formal and informal circumstances, we need to understand more precisely what recognition of such learning involves. The recognition of non–formal learning[3] is defined in different ways by different dictionaries, and also includes a number of synonyms. Thus we may also call it "recognition of prior learning", for which the following synonyms also exist: recognition of learning outcomes; certification of learning outcomes; validation of learning outcomes, etc. (cf. *Terminology...* 2008, 154).

In this article the expression "recognition of non–formal learning" is understood above all in the sense of part (a) of the definition of the expression "recognition of learning outcomes", as follows:

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[2] CEDEFOP – Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
[3] In this article we will use the expression "recognition of non–formal learning" to cover the recognition of both non–formal and informal learning.

a) Formal recognition: the process of granting official status to skills and competences either through the: award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles); or grant of equivalence, credit units or waivers, validation of gained skills and/or competences; and/or

b) Social recognition: the acknowledgement of the value of skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders (*Terminology...* 2008 152, source: Cedefop 2004).

We are therefore talking about an official confirmation of knowledge, skills, competences, for which a certificate is obtained (e.g. an NVQ certificate). Two similar concepts are "validation of learning outcomes" and "assessment of learning outcomes". The first means "confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non–formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification" (*Terminology...* 2008, 199, source: Cedefop). "Assessment of learning outcomes" is defined as follows: "the process of appraising knowledge, know–how, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria (learning expectations, measurement of learning outcomes). Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification"[4] (Terminology … 2008, 31, source: Cedefop 2004). It is important that we do not confuse these expressions with the "mutual recognition of qualifications",[5] which is not the subject of this discussion.

In the field of vocational education and training, it is necessary above all to know that recognition leads either to a certificate or qualification that

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[4] This is also followed by the comment that "in the literature, 'assessment' generally refers to appraisal of individuals whereas 'evaluation' is more frequently used to describe appraisal of education and training methods or providers" (*Terminology...* 2008, 31, source: Cedefop 2004).

[5] It is extremely important that the expressions "recognition of learning outcomes", "validation of learning outcomes" and "assessment of learning outcomes", all of which refer to the recognition of non–formal learning, are not confused with the "mutual recognition of qualifications", which means "the recognition by one or more countries or organisations of qualifications (certificates, diplomas or titles) awarded in (or by) one or more other countries or other organisations." […] "Mutual recognition can be bilateral (between two countries or organisations) or multilateral (e.g. within the European Union or between companies belonging to the same sector) (*Terminology...* 2008, 130, source: Cedefop 2004). In this article we therefore do not deal with the transparency of qualifications facilitated by the mutual recognition of qualifications.

enables promotion or facilitates employment, or to easier possibilities for returning to education (e.g. recognition of parts of education), and that the support system for the recognition of knowledge acquired through non–formal learning is the certificate system.

Thus a qualification system means

"all activities related to the recognition of learning outcomes and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. These activities include: definition of qualification policy, training design and implementation, institutional arrangements, funding, quality assurance; assessment, validation and certification of learning outcomes" (*Terminology…* 2008, 150, source: European Commission 2006).

Here, certification (of skills and competences) means "the process of formally validating knowledge, know–how and/or skills and competences acquired by an individual, following a standard assessment procedure. Certificates or diplomas are issued by accredited awarding bodies" (Tissot 2004, 40, source: Cedefop 2002). This is accompanied by the comment that "certification validates the outcome of either formal learning (training actions) or informal/non–formal learning" (ibid.).

The relevant Slovene dictionary offers a similar definition that in a way summarises the essence of all the synonyms, as may be understood from the definitions: "recognition of non–formal learning" means

"processes and procedures which allow individuals to valorise learning already acquired and use it in further education or employment. Education providers take into account the fact that individuals learn in different ways and recognise knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education, be this in the workplace, on courses, from training or in everyday life" (Muršak 2012, 90–91; source: Vocational Education and Training Act, Rules of Assessment).

We are therefore talking about a narrower segment of the whole that we understand non–formal knowledge to be. We only talk about recognition when this is carried out and applied either for the purposes of education (recognition of a partial or complete qualification in education) or in the labour market (in the case of promotion, in the pay system or in employment in general).

Several ways exist to recognise the knowledge acquired by an individual outside formal circumstances, both within a single country and between different countries, where the differences are even greater (cf. Bjørnåvold 2000 and 2002, Colardyn and Bjørnåvold 2004, Kelava 2006). In this article we will analyse the national vocational qualifications

systems in place in the United Kingdom and in Slovenia, where we will be able to summarise the findings of our analysis of Slovenia's NVQ system in the form of important guidelines for any system, model or approach to the recognition of non–formal learning. On this basis we shall see that the possibilities for a suitably regulated system of recognition of non–formal learning are considerably broader than those offered by the NVQ system, and that the limitation, in most cases, to a single tool via which recognition can take place – i.e. NVQs – is too narrow. The article therefore talks about a wider field than merely national vocational qualifications, in other words about all recognition of non–formal and informal learning, regardless of the purposes for which such learning is potentially recognised. When the fields (both horizontal and vertical) in which recognition is possible are too narrow and too specifically tied to formal (vocational) qualifications, at least a part of non–formal learning – which could perhaps be interesting from the point of view of recognition – is lost, and in this way individuals are also placed in an unequal situation, because a very different value is placed on their non–formal learning.

Regarding the recognition of non–formal learning, another point that should be made at the outset is that if we know that formal education is sometimes hard to acquire, and that individuals encounter many obstacles when trying to acquire formal education (cf. Schutz 2010, Oduaran and Bhola 2006, Werum and Baker 2004, Zajda, Majhanovich and Rust 2006, Walker and Unterhalter 2007, Mohorčič Špolar et al. 2006, Kelava 2003), then non–formal learning is more accessible and at the same time takes on the role of a neutraliser of social differences. But if non–formal learning and its recognition are tied too closely to the needs of employers, as we shall see below, even non–formal learning ceases to be for the benefit of the individual, with the purpose of creating better living and working conditions for everyone. For this reason we shall also reflect on how the recognition of non–formal learning should be designed in such a way as to be more useful to individuals.

With any upgrading of the system or modifications to it, it is worth paying attention to two aspects of the recognition of non–formal learning that have been highlighted by past analyses and comparisons between national systems. Qualifications obtained through recognition need to be identifiable in two separate spheres:

- by employers as recruiters of new employees or employers of existing employees, who should place a suitable value on knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non–formal learning and/or the certificate demonstrating it,

-   in educational institutions throughout the entire vertical, which should enable individuals to use their non–formal learning when enrolling in education – something that can be a powerful motivating tool for the inclusion of adults in education (cf. Kelava 2006).

National systems for the recognition of non–formal learning (or the beginnings of such systems), each according to its own strengths and in line with its own tradition, address part of the issue of lifelong learning by eliminating the unused potentials of hidden (non–formal, unevaluated, unrecognised) knowledge.

Recognition of non–formal learning; national vocational qualifications

We shall take as an example one of the possible methods for recognising non–formal learning: national vocational qualifications.

National vocational qualifications exist both in the United Kingdom and in Slovenia. To start with, we shall define the broader context of use of national vocational qualifications.

In general it has been shown that for countries which use this method of recognising non–formal learning,[6] this modularised and flexible model can be sufficient for the needs of both public and private domains, for the fields of individuals and businesses. This model represents a clear and straightforward example of a vocational education and training system that is based on competences, connected to performance, and oriented towards output (Bjørnåvold 2000 and 2002). Many countries, including Slovenia, have followed the British model and transferred the NVQ model into their

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[6] A study by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) led by Jens Bjørnåvold (Bjørnåvold 2002, 27) identified five groups of countries whose systems for the recognition of non–formal and informal learning share common features, and then identified five different models or approaches to recognition: the Nordic approach, the national vocational qualification (NVQ) approach, the dual system approach, the Mediterranean approach and the "opening up" diplomas and certificates approach. The United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands belong to the national vocational qualification approach, which is partly shared by Slovenia (cf. Kelava 2006) with its own tool via which individuals can validate their own non–formal learning, i.e. national vocational qualifications. It is precisely for this reason that the study of the Slovenian model is relevant in the sense of certain generalisations that apply to all the countries united by the NVQ model.

own concept of the education system. This system, or rather instrument, has since the beginning had to face the challenges of recognition of a very wide variety of learning pathways. This has led to approaches such as accreditation of prior learning (APL) and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) (cf. Simosko 1991, Challis 1993, McKelvey and Peters 1993). The development of both has had an essential impact on the development of European methodologies for the recognition, assessment and validation of non–formal learning (Bjørnåvold 2000 and 2002). Despite its broad application, however, such a system also has its weaknesses. The challenge of developing an acceptable qualification standard, which is the basis for setting up a system of national vocational qualifications, appears, in this context, to be the most serious obstacle. If assessment is supposed to be based on criteria, the quality of standards is of decisive importance. The British experience points to the difficulty of maintaining a balance between excessively general and excessively specific descriptions and definitions of competences (Bjørnåvold 2002, 27).

England[7] operates a system of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) which was designed to accredit competence in the workplace. Assessment relies heavily on "evidence of competence", which may be drawn from previous jobs or voluntary activity, as well as the candidate's current role. NVQs are therefore able to provide recognition of informal and non–formal learning where it is relevant to the target qualification (Leney and Ponton 2007, 26, 27). Let us look at them a little more closely.

"In 1986 the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) were introduced in England. They are job–related, competence–based or outcome–related qualifications that reflect the knowledge and skills that are required to perform a certain vocational activity. National occupational standards that are performance descriptions of what a competent person should be able to do in a particular profession provide the basis for the NVQs, which do not have to be completed within a specified period or a specific learning environment. NVQs consist of units that may be acquired when the learner is ready for an appropriate examination, regardless of how and where this knowledge, skills and competencies have been acquired. Ideally the conduct of the proceedings for the acquisition of an NVQ is as follows. The examiner supports the candidate in identifying his/her skills, selecting the appropriate standards, analysing the learning processes still required

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[7] England, because the United Kingdom has similar but not identical systems: National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in England and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) in Scotland (Leney and Ponton 2007, 26, 27). We shall only consider NVQs.

and the corresponding required learning activities prior to the completion of an NVQ"[8] (Annen 2013, 930) (Cf. British Vocational Qualifications 2007).

We have a very similar system in Slovenia, where NVQs are the most "obvious" and also the most organised way of recognising an individual's non–formal learning.[9] Within the NVQ system, adults can obtain a formal qualification (even) for occupations that are not included in formal education programmes. The NVQs obtained serve above all the needs of businesses and the labour market, since the occupational standards for NVQs are proposed by the social partners with regard to labour needs and the development plans of stakeholders (*Slovenia* 2010, 60). It should be emphasised that NVQs can also enable an individual to obtain a qualification that represents part of a formal education program. The NVQ Act introduced a certification system; this is a network of institutions and bodies enabling individuals to formally recognise (NVQs) the knowledge and competences they have acquired through experience or non–formal and informal learning. The Act sets out the conditions and procedures for the assessment and awarding of NVQs. Assessment takes place against nationally agreed standards of knowledge and the skills requirements for performing a specific occupation or part thereof. Nevertheless, an NVQ

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[8] The stages of accreditation may be described in more detail as follows: "First a reflection of past and current work experience takes place. Acquired competences are identified and a portfolio with supporting documents is created thereafter (learning diaries, letters of reference, work samples, etc.). Usually the verification of NVQs is based on an observation in the workplace, a survey and the preparation of a portfolio. The examiners and the entire process will be monitored by so–called 'external verifiers' to ensure that they apply the criteria in different places in the same way. Depending on which competences are required NVQs are divided into five levels" (Annen 2013, 930).

[9] A good example of the recognition of non–formal learning in Slovenia is the University of Ljubljana's Rules on the procedure and criteria for recognising non–formally acquired knowledge and skills. These Rules regulate the procedure for assessing, verifying, certifying and recognising knowledge and the criteria for recognising knowledge and skills acquired by candidates through non–formal learning before enrolment and during their studies at any member institution of the University of Ljubljana (*Pravilnik...* 2007). An example of the recording – although not the recognition – of non–formal learning and work experience is the *neformalni indeks* or "Nefiks" (literally "non–formal study record"), which is among other things a good way of encouraging people (particularly young people) to systematically record their non–formal experiences (*Nefiks* 2011). None of these forms will be covered in detail here but it is important to emphasise that they are examples of good practice.

does not enable the individual to obtain a school–leaving certificate from a formal education programme (*Slovenia,* 2010, 72). Below we shall find out a little more about NVQs through analysis of selected aspects.

NVQs in a certification system, as we currently have in Slovenia, are not however all that the recognition of non–formal learning could offer the individual should he or she need it. This is important, and several authors (Bjørnåvold 2002, 27, Schuu, Feenstra and Duvekot 2005, 39–40, Raggatt and Williams 1999) also draw attention to the inadequacies of the NVQ system (including in England).

In terms of education legislation, adult education providers must define procedures and those responsible for implementing them (for example: staff responsible for providing information and advice, assessment and recognition boards), and instruments for identifying and validating learning (for example: at the level of upper secondary education, non–formal learning must achieve at least 70% of the content of the formal programme, otherwise the individual participating in the programme has to take an examination covering the "missing" part of the formal programme, corresponding to at least 25 hours of learning, which is equivalent to one credit; the instruments must also define how learning experiences are recognised). Despite all this, the process of assessing, recognising and certifying learning cannot be a substitute for the criteria for admission to further formal education or regulated professions, but merely obliges formal education providers to exempt individuals from specific requirements within specific subjects or parts of a programme, and allow them to progress more quickly within the programme (*Slovenia* 2010, 72).

This is extremely important because in this way – taking into account these obligations – the door to education can be opened more widely to individuals who possess specific knowledge or skills but who, for various reasons (e.g. bad experiences in initial education, financial limitations, distance from educational institutions, etc.), do not wish to return to formal adult education. This is one of the methods that we can use when validating non–formal learning in order to exploit potentials of non–formal learning as a whole and contribute to the greatest possible extent to enabling access to education to the largest possible number of individuals.

At this point, the Slovenian national report goes on to say that one of the possibilities or a possibility that is parallel to the mechanisms or possibilities described above is a certificate system and national vocational qualifications. (ibid.).

At present no methodological and technical basis has yet been developed for the integration of the two systems for recognising informal

learning and non–formal education described above, or for their integration into the formal system. The other systematic measures that would need to be introduced for this to happen (e.g. management, funding, modularisation and decentralisation of responsibility according to the curriculum) have been adopted but have not yet been put into practice in Slovenia (*Slovenia* 2010, 72).

The most widespread and commonly used system of recognising non–formal learning in Slovenia is thus national vocational qualifications, even though other possibilities do exist. Below we shall see that these possibilities are called for not only by national legislation but by other documents as well, and therefore we shall also look specifically at the question of how NVQs are reflected in practice.

Analysis of the situation

Particularly interesting, from the point of view of analysis of the situation in Slovenia, is the document "*Analysis of the implementation of the Resolution on the National Adult Education Programme (ReNPIO) 2005–2008 and Starting points for the formulation of a Resolution on the National Adult Education Programme (ReNPIO) 2010–2013*", prepared by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in 2010 (*Analiza...* 2010), which assesses the implementation of the resolution in question. It is particularly interesting because it also deals in detail with NVQs in Slovenia and shows that we need more room for manoeuvre in the field of the recognition of non–formal learning. The analysis emphasises that the "development and establishment of a system to identify and validate knowledge and skills acquired through non–formal learning" belong among those fields that until 2010 were not fully realised, and counts the necessary measures among those that

> "need to be formulated and introduced [as] additional forms of promoting inclusion in existing programmes and increasing their funding" (*Analiza...* 2010, 7).

Despite the fact that NVQs have prepared occupational standards for a relatively large number of qualifications, the analysis finds that the number of NVQ certificates awarded is relatively small, and above all that they are limited to a narrow range of sectors; the majority of certificates are awarded at the upper secondary level, which was not supposed to be the fundamental purpose of establishing the NVQ system; the system is too unidirectional – focused on gaining employment or changing jobs; the biggest criticism is that it merely formally shortens the duration of

education, etc. (*Analiza...* 2010). The analysis therefore introduces many criticisms that cast a poor light on NVQs in Slovenia. Among the activities necessary for the publication of the National Programme, the authors of the analysis cite the

> "continuation of the development and introduction of instruments and mechanisms for the systemic incorporation of procedures for the evaluation of non–formal learning. It would be worth considering the establishment of an agency for the development of methodologies in the field of the evaluation of non–formal learning" (*Analiza...* 2010, 129).

It has therefore been established in practice that NVQs are not enough, and that we need a broader system of recognition.

The 2011 *White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia* is another document that both assessed the situation and, on the basis of this assessment, envisaged appropriate measures in the future. Among other things, it emphasises the importance of the equality and the systemic connection of formal and non–formal education/informal learning and the diversity and flexibility of educational opportunities (*Bela...* 2011, 373–376). It is also one of the few official documents to explicitly state that education is also necessary from the point of view of the development of individuals (ibid. 374). A similar statement is found in the *Lifelong Learning Strategy* (*Strategija*… 2007). This is something that is not expressly stated in other documents, and the recognition of non–formal learning is understood more as a tool for the business sector and something that will benefit businesses than as something from which individuals can expect benefits (*Enotni*… 2003, *Programski*... 2007).

The evaluation and recognition of knowledge acquired through non–formal education, informal learning and experience is recognised in the White Paper as one of the three support activities in adult education. Among other things the White Paper imposes on the system a lot of support from individuals, envisages the creation of local/regional centres, [...], mechanisms for assuring and assessing the quality of the evaluation and recognition system and promotional activities in this field (*Bela*… 2011, 401).

The existing system for recognising non–formal learning in Slovenia – national vocational qualifications – thus shows some characteristics in its functioning in practice that could be defined as neoliberal. The difficulties that have been identified and that indicate the neoliberal features of the NVQ system are: a too narrow focus on competences, too little general education required, lack of consideration in the pay system, non–inclusion

in collective agreements, relatively small shares of NVQs obtained and shares clearly biased towards specific fields or sectors.

These findings additionally support the doubt expressed in this article that the current system, as it exists in Slovenia, is inadequate, and that the recognition of non–formal learning needs to be supplemented, amended and transformed so that it actually serves its purpose.

Other documents have been published, both in Slovenia and outside it, which have either assessed the situation or established how the field needs to be developed in the future. These documents are above all the following: *Implementing Lifelong Learning Strategies in Europe: Progress report on the follow–up to the 2002 Council resolution, Slovenia,* (Implementing… 2003), *Council Decision of 4 October 2004 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States* (2004/740/EC, OJ L 326/45), *Report on the implementation of the action programme "Education and Training 2010" in 2002–2003* (Poročilo... 2004), *European inventory on validation of informal and non–formal learning. Slovenia* (European inventory… 2007), *European guidelines for validating non–formal and informal learning* (European guidelines… 2009) and others; (for a more detailed explanation cf. Kelava 2006 and 2012).

The findings of these documents with regard to the situation in Slovenia in the field of the recognition of non–formal learning may be summarised as follows: insufficient cooperation of the social partners (employers) in establishing the recognition system; too little concern for individuals at risk of social exclusion; for adults there is a need to adapt requirements for admission to formal education (here particular consideration should be given to existing non–formal learning outcomes); in many documents we read calls for greater flexibility of the workforce, etc. (cf. *OECD Economic Survey* 2011, Canning, Godfrey and Holzer–Zelazewska 2007), which indicates concern for the economy and employers, but less so for the individual and his or her development and well–being. If we add to this the findings of the *Analysis of the implementation of the Resolution on the National Adult Education Programme* (2010), specifically with regard to national vocational qualifications in Slovenia, we see that there are still many possibilities, or actually needs, for building on and supplementing the recognition system.

In a similar way the (excessively) powerful influence of the market on education has also been identified in England and Wales (cf. Hill 2001, Raggatt and Williams 1999).

The discourse of neoliberalism

Whenever we read, in official documents regulating the field of education, demands for "an adaptable workforce", "a flexible labour market", "maximum economic growth", etc., but not for "individuals with the highest possible qualifications", "individuals with basic general education", "individuals employed in jobs corresponding to their education, whose income from employment enables them a decent standard of living", etc., it is reasonable to be concerned that a clearly neoliberal discourse is being used in relation to education.

Let us look briefly at how we understand neoliberalism in general, in other words outside the field of education. After a lengthy explanation of approaches to neoliberalism, historical backgrounds and specific national characteristics, Saad–Filho and Johnston define neoliberalism as follows:

> "The most basic feature of neoliberalism is the systematic use of state power to impose (financial) market imperatives, in a domestic process that is replicated internationally by 'globalisation'." (2005a, 3),

or: Neoliberalism is a "liberal commitment to individual liberty, a belief in the free market and opposition to state intervention in it" (Ritzer 2010, 110). If we wish to understand more clearly the role of the state in neoliberalism, we may summarise it as follows:

> "Neoliberal governments promote notions of open markets, free trade, the reduction of the public sector, the decrease of state intervention in the economy, and the deregulation of markets" (Torres 2009, 1).

For the field of education, or rather vocational education, this means precisely what we indicated above: "adaptable workforce", "flexible labour market", "maximum economic growth". These are the demands which adult education and vocational education and training – and consequently systems for recognising non–formal learning – must deal with.

Such systems, like all "public" systems are devalued and destroyed by the excessive influence of neoliberalism. The individual becomes responsible only for himself/herself, and in this way underprivileged individuals are placed in a significantly worse position than others (cf. Zajda 2005, Saad–Filho and Johnston 2005b, Torres 2009, Ritzer 2010, 46–47, Chomsky 1999/2005, MacPhail, 2008).

Because the field of vocational education and training lies at the intersection of education and the economy, it is also worth paying particular attention to the economics–based, neoliberal view of education. Below, we shall cite some cases in which the EU or individual states expect or require the field of education, the field of adult education in the field of vocational education and training to contribute actively to economic progress. It is, of course, clear that vocational education and training is very closely linked to the sphere of labour (Muršak, 2010), yet the occasional appearance of a tendency to try and make this field serve the economy above all is not insignificant (cf. *Ekonomski*… 2011). It is also clear that in general a better state of the economy means specific advantages for all, for society as a whole, brings more jobs, etc., but it is worrying when education systems, and thus also for example tools for recognising non–formal learning, are pervaded by neoliberal logic. If this is the case, it is the individual – for whom the tool ought to be intended – who becomes a tool in the hands of education policy, in order to better serve the economy. If education or, in our concrete case, the recognition of non–formal learning cannot be a tool that above all serves the individual to develop and exploit his or her potentials to the highest possible degree and in this way enable himself or herself a better position in society (for example a better job), in the face of excessive economic pressure it becomes a tool that leads to greater differences between individuals (first on the basis of education and then more broadly in society) and in this way causes greater social stratification. Because of this, it is extremely important that we look at certain documents, particularly those European documents to which we are fond of referring, and find in them, on closer inspection, neoliberal features where the individual is left well behind.

A neoliberal discourse can already be traced in *Teaching and learning – towards the learning society: White Paper on education and training* (1995), which states without embellishment that the White Paper assigns to lifelong learning a key role in bringing about the new society with its free flows of information, knowledge, goods and persons, and with a flexible and disposable workforce (Kallen 2002, quoted in: MacPhail 2008, 74). A workforce for "one–off use", one could say. The critics of the White Paper (cf. MacPhail 2008) also accuse it of offering very little to broaden the notion of lifelong learning and even of advocating a narrowing of the focus of this term. MacPhail cites many authors who openly analyse the White Paper as a neoliberal document. We may also conclude from this, and this should also apply to the statements that follow, that the tools or measures derived from this, which certainly include the recognition of all non–formal learning, are undoubtedly

neoliberal tools that urge individuals to adapt to economic and social changes, where the responsibility (including financial responsibility) is borne above all by the individuals themselves.

It then follows similarly both in the *Lisbon Strategy* (2000) (competitive, dynamic economy; high level of production, exploitation of the workforce) and in its revision (*Working...* 2005), where apart from the emphasis on the flexibility of the labour market the previous demands are slightly moderated. In the *Copenhagen Declaration* (2002), which is the fundamental European document for the field of vocational education and training, we note above all the simplification of systems of recognition and a subordination to certain common rules and provisions imposed from above. In the *communiqués* that followed the *Copenhagen Declaration*, we read about the role of education in building the labour market (*Maastricht...* 2004, 4), the direct connection between tools for the recognition of non–formal learning and the economy (*Helsinki...* 2006), the fundamental changes in national education policies as result of the incorporation of tools into national legislation on a voluntary basis (*Bordeaux...* 2008), which brings a similar logic without a reflection on the individual, and with the excessive emphasis on the benefits that national economies or the European economy will gain from the new system of vocational education and, of course, in this package, from the new tools for recognising non–formal learning (cf. *Bruges Communiqué* 2010).

With regard to documents written by states themselves, we can generally conclude (with specific exceptions; cf. *Bela*… 2011, 369–417) that they are actually in the service of increasing economic growth, boosting the economy, and capital, and less in the service of the individual and his or her potentials and aspirations, and of a better and more solid society and community. Unfortunately we can agree with the claims of other authors (cf. MacPhail 2008, Pikalo 2003) that it is more important in these cases what the business community will gain from planned measures in the field of education (vocational education and training, adult education, recognition of non–formal learning) than what the majority population, particularly those with lower qualifications, will gain.

Greater flexibility of the labour market and a shortening of notice periods means more for the economy and less for the individual, and more temporary jobs (cf. Bourdieu 1998/2006a). The appeals that can be read in the above documents for changes that are "essential" for the development of the economy, and for all of us to adapt to this, are exploited by employers. Bourdieu writes they exploit this need for changes as a threat to employees, who are in constant fear for their jobs, for which "a reserve army of labour rendered docile by uncertainty and the constant threat of

unemployment at all levels of the hierarchy" lies in wait (Bourdieu 1998/2006a, 208); in this way does today's reality change the destiny of the individual and society (cf. Lengrand 1970, Chomsky, 1999/2005, Bourdieu 1998/2006a, 2002/2006b, Hanžek 2000). In such a system, and with the position of education so weakened, non–formal learning is either entirely devalued or embedded (e.g. via an individual tool) in the mechanisms of the economy. In the name of increasing possibilities for the economy, the OECD has adopted (including in its report on Slovenia; Ekonomski… 2011) a hegemonic attitude through which imposes its demands on states in all fields, including education.

"Modern economies require, more than ever, high levels of skill and flexibility of the labour force" (OECD. 1985. Education in modern society. Paris: OECD., quoted in: MacPhail 2008, 67). It is appropriate to question the consequences this has for the education system.

Let us ask ourselves: how can we bring the recognition of non–formal learning closer to individuals? How can we respond to their needs? In practice it has proved that the existing mechanisms for recognising non–formal learning are not entirely adequate, and therefore we are seeking additional solutions besides the existing infrastructure in the field of vocational education and training.

The fact is, a system like NVQs cannot encompass all non–formal learning for which there might be a need for formal validation. Possibilities need to be offered, and not reduced – thereby placing new obstacles in front of individuals who either feel impeded or are actually impeded in their educational and/or career progression.

Further steps – by way of conclusion

At the European level much has already been done. In 2009 Cedefop, the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, published its *European guidelines for validating non–formal and informal learning* (*European...* 2009). These are based on the common principles adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2004 and on the work of the Recognition of Learning Outcomes Group (now the Learning Outcomes Group), and enable a support framework for the development of validation practices. The European Commission likewise expected that the validation of non–formal and informal learning throughout Europe would be stimulated by the introduction of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the development of national qualifications frameworks (*Validation...* 2011). More about this can be found in the ninth chapter of this book: "Qualifications frameworks

and learning outcomes as supporters of validation of non–formal and informal learning".

The European Union has already adopted a large number of documents – the more important ones are mentioned above – which, while they understand the field of recognition more broadly than is currently the practice in many states, nevertheless contain demands that cannot be characterised as anything other than neoliberal. Taking into account all these demands in the field of the recognition of non–formal learning or, more broadly, the field of vocational education and training and that part of adult education to which this relates, could mean that vocational education and training is not intended for individuals and their development but only for the economy and its needs.

Up to this point we have offered a rough outline of the system for recognising non–formal learning in Slovenia and compared it with the system of national vocational qualifications in the United Kingdom. We have looked at the extent to which Slovenia's system of national vocational qualifications is adequate and at the accusations levelled against it, and examined how broadly the field of recognition of non–formal learning should extend, considering the recommendations. What interests us now, therefore, are the further possibilities that may exist. In view of the literature covered and the situation on the ground that has been established by analysis (*Analiza...* 2010, *Bela…* 2011), we have both the opportunity and the obligation to build on existing routes to the recognition of non–formal learning.

In many of the documents we have covered, and also in the national vocational qualifications system itself (cf. *Analiza…* 2010), we can recognise neoliberal features, demands and recommendations. Wherever the concrete recognition of non–formal learning is mentioned as a tool with which to achieve a more flexible labour market, contribute to the development of the economy, etc., there is a danger that we are expanding, modifying and renewing the system of recognition of non–formal learning in the wrong direction and for the wrong reasons. Neoliberalism in documents relating to education has been pointed out by many authors (cf. Bourdieu 1998/2006a and 2002/2006b, Chomsky 1999/2005, Laval 2003/2005, MacPhail 2008).

It can even happen that the economic sphere interferes with and involves itself in the field of education, comments on it (exclusively) from the financial point of view, and evaluates it merely through the perspective of funds invested in comparison with advantages obtained for the economy. This has also happened recently in Slovenia (cf. *Ekonomski…* 2011). Whenever we understand education and any of its segments merely

as a market commodity, this is a major problem from the point of view of the individual (cf. Laval 2003/2005, Kodelja 2003/2005, Čadež and Kelava 2009, Kelava 2012), since this adds new social differences to existing ones and in this way contributes to reproducing existing social relations via the education system.

Non–formal knowledge (and with it the instruments for its recognition) can also be understood in a different way. We can take it as an alternative to formal education and as something via which the individual can demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and competences, which have not necessarily been obtained in the (paid for) system of formal education but instead through non–formal learning, in non–formal and informal circumstances; with a suitably regulated system for the recognition of non–formal learning, we can avoid neoliberalism in (some of the current) tools for the identification and validation of non–formal learning and use it for the benefit of the individual and his or her well–being.

As stated at the beginning, in building on and expanding this system, both vertically and horizontally, we need to ensure that we take a step forward in its implementation in such a way as to take into account, without compromise, the following:

- ensuring that certificates demonstrating knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non–formal learning are taken into consideration by employers at the level which they represent, and are not overshadowed by formal education certificates (this also needs to be achieved in cases involving certificates from fields that are less widespread that can only be acquired by a small number of people), and
- ensuring that the certificates demonstrating knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non–formal learning are part of everyday use when it comes to opening doors into the education system – be it formal or non–formal education – both when entering education and when moving between levels of education and between education systems themselves.

While some of the tools envisaged by the European Union contain these elements in principle, in practice we are still far from having such a well regulated system.

We have presented the recognition of non–formal knowledge from several points of view: it is part of vocational education and training, it allows individuals to validate knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non–formal or informal learning, where the validation of non–

formal learning (certificate, qualification) should open the doors both to a better job (or to employment in general) and to education. We have seen that the most visible form of recognition of non–formal learning in Slovenia, the national vocational qualifications (NVQ) system, is not fully adequate and does not offer sufficiently broad possibilities, least of all in practice, and is more in the service of employers and the economy than of individuals.

While many documents envisage a broader framework for the recognition of non–formal learning – something which needs to be exploited – it nevertheless turns out that many of them are burdened by a neoliberal orientation that also places education at the service of the economy.

In ideal circumstances the situation regarding non–formal knowledge would have a different character: individuals who possess knowledge, skills and competences that are not covered by their diplomas could formally validate and certify them, and in this way open doors. Yet our initial enthusiasm over all that we could achieve through additional approaches in the field of the recognition of non–formal learning may diminish when we realise that this is yet another neoliberal approach. Olssen (2006) demonstrates the inherent dangers afflicting lifelong learning programmes of being harnessed in the interests of neoliberal reason. He even suggests that lifelong learning has substituted knowledge, and reflects on what the consequences of this might be. The key strategy, of which lifelong learning is a component is that of "workforce versatility", which enables high levels of job mobility, premised on a high level of general and technical training and a ready ability to add new skills in order to make change possible – the "lifelong worker" thus becomes the "ideal worker". It would be good if the recognition of non–formal learning did not become part of this mechanism. As a strategy, then, lifelong learning enables a growth in the permissiveness of legal restraints over conditions of work and employment, especially dismissal, which translates as a proposal to increase the laxity of controls over employee rights and safeguards with regard to job security or protection, ensuring an automatic mechanism of worker adaptability. This reduces workers' ties to a particular company or business by making the employment contract itself more flexible. Olssen continues that it is important to realise that strategies such as flexibilisation must be understood as mechanisms of neoliberal control with direct advantages for the principal actors involved (ibid.).

With this in mind it is necessary to be extremely cautious when it comes to making further changes to the system.

Let us go back to the 1995 White Paper on education and training in Europe, which we have shown is responsible for spreading neoliberal ideas and views of education.

The so–called European system for the comparison and dissemination of definitions, methods and practices of this kind is supposed to: "(1) pinpoint a number of well–defined areas of knowledge of a general or more specialised nature, (2) devise validation systems for each of them and (3) introduce new, more flexible ways of acknowledging skills" (Teaching and learning... 1995, 53, 54). With regard to strengthening the recognition of non–formal learning, we read that

> "[i]n complementing formal qualification systems, this approach would provide individuals with greater independence in putting together their own qualifications. It will awaken a new thirst for education in those not wishing or unable to learn in a conventional teaching setting" (ibid. 54).

This is a good starting point for the further development of the field. We should plan all further steps with the awareness that the traditional evaluation of formal learning is inflexible with regard to learning acquired by other routes. In view of all the recommendations (cf. Council Decision 2004/740/ES), it cannot be enough, as we have emphasised several times above, that we certify knowledge on the basis of preprepared standards. Of course the existence of recognition as it takes place in the case of NVQs makes sense, provided we can ensure that the inadequacies of the system identified by analyses are eliminated, since in fact only NVQs or a similar system can serve the needs of a wider demand for recognition of non–formal learning. Here, however, it is extremely important that the door does not close with NVQs, so that all recognition is not based only on preprepared standards.

For this reason we conclude from all of the above that the suitable development of the field of recognition of non–formal learning would be as follows: services should be set up which are capable of accepting any kind of application from an individual for the recognition of non–formal learning. There should be no restrictions with regard to the field that such an application relates to. The individual could therefore request the procedure of recognition of non–formal learning, regardless of the field to which the learning he or she wishes to have formally recognised belongs; the fields covered should be unlimited, both horizontally (i.e. all sectors of the economy including so–called hobby fields) and vertically (i.e. up to the highest levels of education or parts thereof). On this basis a qualified panel, a kind of jury, is called upon to study the individual case and make a decision on the basis of the submitted documents or, if necessary, the

knowledge, skills or competences demonstrated, and, using its own judgement and professional autonomy, decide whether or not to award a certificate. Such a certificate should be able to be used both for entering the labour market or obtaining promotion, and for obtaining exemption from specific parts of education for adults.

Such a "system" could be the scope of tools for the recognition of non–formal learning. The focus is not on the benefits which the economy and capital would have from the recognition of non–formal learning, but on the individual and thus on society as a whole.

Non–formal learning exists in society but is hidden and often unrecognised. When it is possessed by someone who is not a typical participant in education and who for this reason (lower educational qualifications, etc.) suffers the disadvantages of a weaker position in society, uncertain employment, a lower income and a poorer financial situation, recognition of non–formal learning could only improve the social position of such a person. Not only would this person be able to make use of this learning in the labour market and obtain a certain advantage when it came to getting a job or being promoted to a more responsible position, the advantages that would follow from relatively simple certification (in comparison with the more demanding participation in any form of education) would provide a motivation for further participation in education, including shorter non–formal forms of education, or for the completion of abandoned formal education (drop–out) and a clear identification of goals in education, all of which would help improve the position of this individual in society.

The aim, then, should become a search for ways to ensure that the recognition of non–formal learning becomes a tool in the hands of individuals who can use it to improve their social position. In this way, with the recognition of non–formal learning we could go beyond formal education, which succumbs to many restrictions.

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Chapter Eleven

University Careers Centres: Spaces of Non–Formal Learning for Students

Sabina Žnidaršič Žagar

Abstract

Slovenia, like other countries of the European Union, is today facing stagnation in the incorporation of young people, including tertiary graduates, into the labour market. Good employability includes, as well as external factors over which the individual has no direct influence, the personal characteristics of the individual. Awareness of the importance of good employability means empowering and strengthening individuals so that, through a process of lifelong learning, they are able to find and retain sustainable employment within the labour market, in order to realise their career goals and contribute, through their own creative work, to their own personal satisfaction and success while at the same time contributing to the success of their employer, the economy and society as a whole. The good employability of the individual assumes the constant supplementing of specialist knowledge, generic skills and competences, values and a personal positive attitude to learning as a lifelong process. Acquiring, developing and maintaining the qualities of good employability most frequently takes place in non–formal and informal forms of learning.

Universities in Slovenia have set up careers centres to enable students to acquire, in a non–formal manner, the necessary knowledge and skills and develop those competences, attitudes and personal characteristics that can significantly improve their employability. The University of Ljubljana, for example, opened its first careers centre five years ago (in 2008), and we are now beginning to see results similar to those of careers centres at other European universities, namely that the promotion and facilitation of good employability is more effective when careers centres

are more intensively involved, through their activities, in the study process itself. The more the importance of the individual's responsibility for the development of his or her own career and good employability is integrated into study processes – for example: as stimulation of the development of generic skills and competences and/or the direct involvement of students in work processes and various forms of cooperation with employers – the more actively students explore and develop their own potentials, including via non–formal forms of learning, and in this way strengthen their employability.

The narrow regulation of professions with formally required educational qualifications is slowly disappearing from the modern labour market, while competences relevant to the performance of a constantly evolving range of tasks are becoming increasingly decisive. The skills that will be sought after in the labour market of tomorrow and which will enable the individual to participate actively in it include the individual's capacities for independent learning, creativity, multiculturality, transdisciplinarity, mastery of modern technologies and social integration in the widest variety of social environments, including virtual ones. These are skills which go well beyond standard curricula and which the individual most often requires and develops through various forms of non–formal and informal learning.

Keywords: employability, skills, competences, graduates, careers centres, career guidance

Introduction

In the modern labour market, finding employment as a project in which the individual job seeker invests all his or her knowledge, skills, competences and personal characteristics. The individual can acquire the qualities that increase his or her capacity to find suitable employment in a wide variety of ways and forms: formal, non–formal and informal learning, the school system, extracurricular activities, voluntary or informal work, student jobs, various forms of (primarily) non–formal learning and education. In the present article we are interested in how the employability of an individual is – or can be – affected by non–formal forms of learning and participation in the various activities offered by careers centres at universities. We shall look at the factors of good employability in contemporary society and, in particular, the role of careers centres at universities as centres of non–formal learning and places in which young, highly qualified job seekers can acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and personal qualities. Above all because their position

in the Slovenian labour market today (although similar trends may be traced throughout the EU) is an extremely difficult one.

Terms[1]

Learning — in its broadest sense — is an inherent part of human existence; it takes place constantly and is to a large extent non–formal, informal and experiential. Learning is a broader term than education, although the two terms are often interchangeable in the literature;[2] learning may be understood as a hypernym of education. Education is a more structured and (potentially also) formalised, verified and targeted form of learning: "Learning is the acquisition of knowledge and skills." (Žalec 2013, 76)

Knowledge. Several definitions of knowledge exist; one definition describes it as the body of information that leads to understanding (Gettier 1963). For our context it is important that knowledge can be acquired both within the formal education vertical and in non–formal and informal forms of learning. Knowledge that is transmitted within the formal education system is assigned value by society, subject to agreed criteria and (also) certified. However, knowledge is significantly broader category; Michael Polanyi (1964) distinguishes between "explicit knowledge" – knowledge that is expressed in formal, systematic language and is therefore transmissible – and "tacit knowledge" – which is acquired through direct experience. Essential for the understanding of knowledge and our attitude to what we understand this knowledge is the fact that it does not only exist in itself, it is not absolute, but is rather a cultural variable, it is always culturally conditioned and therefore also subject to the values, views and prejudices of society/culture and the individual.

Skills relate to the learnt, acquired, developed characteristics of the individual through which the individual significantly increases his or her effectiveness. These may be roughly divided into "soft skills" and "hard skills"; the former relate to the personal characteristics, habits and attitudes of the individual and affect social inclusion and job and career success; the latter represents the individual's ability to perform specific (above all) occupational tasks. The literature also contains alternative classifications

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[1] In the specialist literature and – even more so – in everyday use, the meanings of the terms used in the text are frequently different or unclear, and it therefore seems important to us to explain how we use them in the present text.

[2] See also: Kelava, P. ed. 2013. *Neformalno učenje? : kaj pa je to? [Non–formal learning? What's that?]* (Digitalna knjižnica, Dissertationes, 24). Ljubljana, Pedagoški inštitut. http://www.pei.si/Sifranti/StaticPage.aspx?id=140.

of skills into groups, above all with regard to their greater or lesser universality, transferability or usefulness in different areas of life and work, all with regard to their specificity or the focus on specific work tasks: e.g. core skills, transferable/generic skills, professional skills.

Most frequently, skills are combined into groups:

1. *Communication skills* include expressing ideas (beliefs, feelings), listening to others, formulating questions, disseminating information with the help of various technologies, reading and understanding information (words, graphs, diagrams, etc.), communicating with others, acquiring information, writing clear messages, speaking in public, etc.
2. *Numerical skills* include analysing data, researching, measuring and calculating, finding information with the help of various technologies, managing money, negotiating, comparing data, etc.
3. *Problem–solving skills* include identifying problems, seeking innovative solutions, identifying different parts of a problem, looking for causes, being innovative when seeking solutions, using solutions effectively, testing the success of solutions, modifying solutions if necessary, etc.
4. *Leadership skills* include supervising and directing others, organising social functions, motivating others, negotiating, making decisions, planning and delegating, chairing meetings, directing others, regulating own work, explaining things to others, appearing in public, being goal–oriented, mediating, assuming risk, providing mentoring, being competitive, etc.
5. *Lifelong learning* includes an openness to learning and personal growth, identifying those areas in which we are strong and those which we can develop, setting own educational goals, identifying effective sources of learning and learning opportunities, planning and monitoring own educational goals, etc.
6. *Teamwork* includes understanding the dynamics of work in a group, flexibility/adaptability/openness to change, respect for differences, acceptance of feedback and formulation of feedback in an acceptable form, contribution to the group by sharing information and knowledge, leading or following depending on circumstances, understanding the role of conflict in the group as a way of finding solutions, leadership and the addressing of conflicts, administration, patience with others, encouragement of others, concern for others, the ability to persuade others, concern for others' well–being, listening to and considering the opinions of

others, the ability to teach others, friendliness, sensitivity, sociability, trust, assisting others, etc.

7. *Project participation skills* include designing and overseeing a project from start to finish, seeking feedback, selecting and using tools and technologies appropriate to the needs of the project, monitoring project performance and seeking ways to improve it, organising tasks within the group, decision–making, planning, delegating, chairing meetings, self–regulation, explaining the project to others, goal–orientation, problem–solving, mediation in the case of conflicts within the group, assumption of responsibility, etc.

8. *Manual skills* include making things, constructing or repairing things, designing things, using complex apparatus, handling tools and apparatus, driving and operating vehicles, etc.

9. *Creative, artistic skills* include artistry or the ability to express oneself through art, musicality, performance, drawing, playing an instrument, expressivity or the ability to express and communicate feelings, artistic ideas, writing literary texts, poetry, web design, etc.[3]

Although the list of the most sought–after skills in the labour market changes over time and with regard to special requirements of the employer, the following skills nevertheless remain part of the core selection:

1. communication skills,
2. analytical/research skills,
3. computer/technical literacy,
4. adaptability/flexibility and the ability to manage multiple priorities (multitasking),
5. interpersonal skills (teamwork skills, ability to motivate, conflict mitigation),
6. leadership/management skills,
7. multicultural sensitivity/awareness
8. planning/organising skills,
9. problem–solving and creativity,
10. teamwork.[4]

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[3] See, e.g. http://www.quintcareers.com/transferable_skills_set.html. Accessed July 2013. See also this list of transferable, generic skills:
http://www.roguecc.edu/emp/Resources/transferable_skills_checklist.htm
Accessed July 2013.
[4] See, e.g. http://www.quintcareers.com/job_skills_values.html (accessed July 2013), where the top ten transferable, generic skills sought by employers are listed.

Competence or ability means effectiveness in the use of the knowledge, skills, views, beliefs, values and behaviours of the individual so that he or she can be as effective as possible in concrete situations. As in the case of skills, there are several different (and similar) groupings of competences, where they are grouped together above all in terms of the importance of their use:

1. *Basic, key (core) competences*, which include: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression.[5]
2. *Transferable, generic competences* are competences which are generic and transferable to different duties that require them, e.g. an individual occupation or occupational sector. These are divided into:
   a. instrumental; they include cognitive, technological and linguistic skills,
   b. interpersonal and intrapersonal; most frequently include social skills and social interaction/cooperation skills,
   c. systemic; include a combination of understanding, sensitivity and knowledge.
3. *Professional competences* relating to individual fields of work or tasks and their requirements for special knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours.

The values or system of values to which the individual adheres and which are reflected in his or her attitude to work are also closely connected to both skills and competences. Employers highlight the following key personal values or individual orientation that they expect from co–workers:

1. honesty, integrity and morality; in particular the integrity of individual is becoming increasingly sought–after today,
2. adaptability/flexibility,
3. commitment, diligence, work ethic,

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[5] See, e.g. *Key competences in the EU*, Round table, 17 May 2012, material: http://www.eupika.mfdps.si/Files///Deliverable%20No.%207%20–%20Round%20table%20materials%20%CB%9DKey%20competences%CB%9D.pdf. Accessed July 2013.

4. reliability and responsibility,
5. loyalty,
6. positive orientation, motivation,
7. professionalism,
8. self–confidence,
9. inner motivation,
10. willingness to learn.[6]

Employability is a term that has been in use since the beginning of the twentieth century, although the concept of employability began to change significantly and acquire new meanings in the 1970s, within the context of various (mainly neoliberal) theories of human resource management (HRM) (Gaizer 1998, 2001). There are many interpretations of the concept of employability which differ in terms of their breadth or their focus on a target public and purpose.

Employers, for example, clearly emphasise the adaptability of the individual to changing conditions in the labour market; thus, for example, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) defined employability in 1999 as the

> "possession by an individual of the qualities and competences required to meet the changing needs of employers and customers and thereby help to realise his or her aspirations and potential in work" (Confederation of British Industry 1999).

In 1998 Hillage and Pollard formulated a broader definition of employability which includes, as well as the individual's knowledge, skills and abilities and the ability to present those assets in the labour market, the environmental, social and economic context in which work takes place. They see employability as the individual's capability to move self–sufficiently within the labour market, to realise potential through sustainable employment.

It soon became apparent that the problem of a single definition of the concept of employability is linked above all to its dual "nature"; on the

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[6] See also: http://bus.camosun.bc.ca/top10/pdf/handout–flashdrive–FINALupdate–Sept2.pdf . Accessed December 2013. A survey carried out among employers who employ graduates in Slovenia provided similar answers to the question of what personality characteristics are particularly valued in job applicants: "stability of character and integrity, motivation, a healthy level of ambition, frankness, thirst for knowledge, responsibility, initiative, precision, openness, willingness to get involved, attitude to work and co–workers." (Stanič 2012, 11)

one hand employability is a characteristic of the individual – his or her ability to find, keep, change or seek a suitable job – while on the other hand the individual's employability is significantly determined by external factors that are independent of the individual.

The concept of employability should therefore be understood holistically, as a dynamic interaction between the characteristics of the individual and external factors which together determine how successful the individual will be in the labour market.

Evans (1999) proposed the following division or arrangement of concepts:

1. Employability or employability components is/are: the extent of the individual's transferable skills, the level of personal motivation to seek work, the extent of the individual's mobility in seeking work, access to information and support networks, and the extent and nature of other personal barriers to work.
2. External factors are: the attitudes of employers towards the unemployed, the supply and quality of training and education, the availability of other assistance for disadvantaged job seekers, the extent to which the tax–benefits system successfully eliminates benefit traps, the supply of appropriate jobs in local economy.

McQuaid et al. (2005) developed a tripartite model of employability according to which individual employability is dependent on the interaction of:

1. individual factors,
2. personal circumstances, and
3. external factors.

In circles concerned with the question of employability among the student population, the most acceptable definition of employability accepted today is the one formulated by Yorke in 2006, which states that employability is:

"a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy."

It is, however, possible to understand the concept of employability in a more creative way, placing it explicitly in the context of the individual's whole life and proposing an alternative definition:

Awareness of the importance of good employability means empowering and strengthening individuals so that, through a process of lifelong learning, they are able to find and retain sustainable employment within the labour market, in order to realise their career goals and contribute, through their own creative work, to their own personal satisfaction and success while at the same time contributing to the success of their employer, the economy and society as a whole.

Coaching is a more recent form of professional support for individuals or groups which began to develop at the end of the last century as an independent discipline with national and international associations,[7] codified professional and ethical standards, research, specialist publications, oversight of professional standards, specialised training for members and promotion of activities. The essential purpose of coaching is to enable individuals or groups to identify their own capabilities, ambitions and goals and develop easier, faster and more effective pathways to their realisation with the help of a coach (mediator, advisor, instructor, trainer). Through the process of coaching the individual formulates his or her own professional goals and develops plans for the realisation, identifies weaknesses in knowledge and skills and identifies measures to improve them, improves his or her individual and professional approach, improves interpersonal relations and builds on previous education and training. The essence of successful coaching is the relationship between coach and coachee. This is based on trust, confidentiality and individual guidance. The coach encourages the coachee's development by offering impartial feedback, asking questions that stimulate discussion, and encouraging reflection and self–reflection.

Graduate employability in the modern labour market and the importance of the non–formal acquisition of knowledge, skills, competences and behaviours

Since 2009 the labour market in Slovenia has seen a growing number of unemployed graduates of all cycles of higher education; between 2008 and 2012 their number tripled, growing from 4 508 to 12 161 (Marjetič and Lesjak 2013). At a time when it appeared that Slovenia had already taken a decisive step towards the knowledge society of the future and was approaching the Lisbon goals (Kambič 2008), something indicated both by

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[7] One such association is the International Coach Federation (ICF), which is committed to ethical standards of practice. For more information see: http://www.coachfederation.org/ICF/. Accessed December 2013.

figures on the growth in the percentage of those completing secondary and tertiary education and by falling unemployment figures among highly qualified individuals in 2006 and 2008, the unemployment curve for this group began to rise steeply.

The reasons given to explain the growing unemployment among tertiary graduates in Slovenia depend on who it is that is giving them; different stakeholders – e.g. universities, employers, unemployed graduates – cite different reasons. According to a recent study on the theme of graduate employment (which was also the first of its kind), carried out by the University of Ljubljana (Komljenovič et al. 2013), the present conditions should not be a cause for concern; according to figures obtained from the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the great majority of University of Ljubljana graduates found employment shortly after graduation.

"The percentage of University of Ljubljana graduates who find employment within six months of completing education is around 80%. No major changes can be observed in the generations who have graduated during the economic crisis, i.e. from 2008 until the end of the period under observation. These results are favourable for University of Ljubljana graduates," states the study (2).

It should, however, be pointed out that the study was based above all on figures from the Employment Service of Slovenia, which collects information on registered job seekers; thus the study states that the individual faculties and academies of University of Ljubljana can boast a 100% (!) rate of employment among graduates who successfully completed studies up to 2010 (Annexes 36–65). A second point is, of course, the fact that the figures relate to past years and end in 2010, when the effects of the economic crisis were also beginning to be reflected more seriously in the employment of highly qualified individuals in Slovenia. The usefulness of the study is further limited by the fact that it is based on employment figures and therefore says nothing about the essential issue: graduate employability.[8]

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[8] It would in any case be important to know where and how graduates are employed; are they doing jobs for which they acquired relevant professional knowledge during their studies? Does their job guarantee them independence, security and the possibility to plan a future? We are still waiting for the results of our research into the employability of graduates, not only of UL but of all higher education institutions in Slovenia. UL took the first steps in that direction with the launch of the UL Graduate Employability Survey, which by surveying successive

Employers do not share the optimistic view of the University of Ljubljana; in interviews[9] they emphasise the obstacles they perceive in the field of employment, including or above all the employment of highly qualified individuals. When attempting to explain why there is such a surplus of graduate first–time job seekers in the Slovenian labour market, they frequently shift the blame for the situation onto another partner or partners: the university, as an educational institution, and graduates, as job seekers. They argue that universities educate too many job seekers, and that among the latter the necessary competences for effective inclusion in work processes are insufficiently developed. The most frequently cited argument is the (alleged) poor employability of graduates, which relates above all to their generic skills and competences and less to their specialist knowledge, which in most cases (even) employers claim is good.[10]

Difficulties with the incorporation of young people, including graduates, into the labour market are not only a feature of the situation in Slovenia. Many EU countries are facing similar difficulties. When setting out the results of research aimed at identifying what elements of graduate employability are important to employers, European Commission representative Julie Fionda (2013) highlighted the following general findings:

- within the European Union the number of unemployed young people is growing,
- young people with higher qualifications have the best chance of employment,
- there is no field of study that guarantees young people employment on graduation,
- unemployment is also increasing among young graduates.

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generations of graduates on an ongoing basis will also obtain the necessary data for analysis of this kind.

[9] The article uses statements and comments from employers who have cooperated with the Careers Centres of the University of Ljubljana. In–depth authorised statements from employers and analysis of their attitudes towards employing graduates are not yet available.

[10] That the professional knowledge of UL graduates is very good and more than comparable with the knowledge of students and graduates from other universities is also demonstrated by the results of various competitions at which UL students are generally very successful (with an above–average success rate) and by the satisfaction of foreign employers with the knowledge, professionalism and work of UL graduates.

Rapidly changing work processes and conditions, which require new job seekers to have well–developed generic competences, are a significantly more important factor in the difficulties experienced by graduates in the transition from the academic, educational environment to the labour market than the current unfavourable economic conditions in individual European countries. The urgent need to strengthen the acquisition and development of generic competences is also underlined by the European Commission's Strategy for the Modernisation of Higher Education, adopted on September 2011, which commits itself:

- to increase the number of higher education graduates within the EU,
- to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training, to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high–skill occupations,
- to provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, and to encourage cross–border co–operation to boost higher education performance,
- to strengthen the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and business, and
- to create effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence.

The research mentioned above, which included 900 employers from nine EU countries (not Slovenia), brought the following results:

1. if employers have to choose between a candidate who has a degree and one who does not, but who has work experience, they will choose the candidate with a degree – work experience is desirable, but in combination with formal education;
2. employers are not greatly concerned about the level of a candidate's degree (after the Bologna reform: 1st, 2nd, 3rd cycle);
3. employers do not make strong distinctions with regard to graduates' examination grades and give priority to those with average grades (with clear exceptions!);
4. employers do not make distinctions between the universities from which candidates have graduated;
5. employers give priority to breadth of studies;
6. employers see international experience as an advantage in job applicants;

7. employers appreciate positive personality characteristics in job applicants;
8. the selection of candidates following the job interview is 90% affected by: work experience, personality characteristics and candidates' additional skills.

By way of a summary of the research, the author states that the better employability of graduates is influenced by:

1. special knowledge, in particular professional knowledge, connections between the field of study and the job, relevant work experience;
2. interpersonal skills, therefore employers prefer to employ someone with lower qualifications and better developed skills, a person with communication skills, a person with organisational, creative and innovative skills, a person who has an international orientation;
3. transferable, generic academic skills (e.g. analytical skills, flexibility, responsibility, etc.) are assumed to be to be essential (and not just an advantage).

Is apparent, from conversations with employers who operate in the Slovenian labour market and employ graduates, that they expect similar characteristics from job applicants. In the comparative study "Relevance of International Student Mobility to Work and Employment – comparison of findings in Brazil, Chile, Slovenia and Finland", Valeska V. Geldres Weiss (2013) found that employers on both continents prize above all the following characteristics in young, highly educated job applicants: ability to cooperate, reliability, responsibility and ability to solve problems. In Slovenia employers also emphasise: knowledge of foreign languages, ability to seek information, ability to acquire new knowledge.

Employers on both continents support (at least in principle) student mobility and expect it to provide, above all: familiarity with and understanding and acceptance of different cultures (intercultural experience) and knowledge of foreign language; employers in Slovenia also expect students to make useful contacts and business connections abroad and that they will become more mature and more self–confident. Such employers are, however, the exception in Slovenia; the study revealed Slovenia to be the country in which employers do not see international experience is an advantage; the great majority of employers (36 of the 58 respondents) replied that this is not an important factor, while only three of them specially seek such experiences in new employees.

Career centres at universities and their role
in the acquisition of key skills for good employability

In the modern world of rapid and (most probably) unpredictable changes, particularly when we're talking about future needs in the labour market, it is becoming increasingly evident that generic skills and competences and the related personality characteristics of the individual will be the key to the individual's success in the labour market. Awareness of the importance of good employability and career planning is the fruit of a process of personal development and education; in order to be able to achieve both the development goals and the educational goals of good employability, attention to employability should be systematically embedded throughout the education vertical. Since such goals do not have an appropriate and systemically defined place in the Slovenian education vertical, the period of university studies, both within and alongside the study process, is actually the last opportunity;[11] the university environment, with its predictability, security, connections and mentoring, offers a suitable environment for the acquisition of knowledge and experience, the development of good employability competences, and the practical testing of such competences. It was with this purpose in mind that so–called careers centres began to develop at universities in Slovenia after 2008.

Various models of operation of such services have developed and established themselves at universities around the world, depending above all on the recognition in each case of the importance and content of the concept of employability as a culture of cooperation between the academic and business worlds within an individual university. Yorke and Knight (2004) point out that careers services, as special services whose purpose is to strengthen the employability of future graduates, are in many cases the most common way in which individual educational institutions contribute to the employability of their students, regardless of the fact that the effect of such endeavours is significantly less if their activities and messages are not also an integral part of the study curriculum at the educational institution or of its study programmes.

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[11] Education for good employability and a successful career is a weak area in Slovenia in that we do not have specially designed programmes that include, for example, all students from the final year of elementary school and all secondary school students. In many parts of the world, particularly in Western countries, lifelong career management and – consequently – good employability is taught in a much more deliberate manner and is included in the context of "education for life".

Career centres within universities can be organised in various ways, depending on the functions they perform. According to Watts (1997), the traditional and core activities of careers centres comprise: individual and group guidance, information, and employer liaison and placement. It is worth pointing out that one drawback of such a focus is that the activities of careers centres are used by those students who are already aware of the importance of building employability while, by contrast, those who are not aware of it and would therefore have the greatest need for such activities do not use them. Realisations of this kind have led to the formulation of more innovative strategies to include more students in the activities of careers centres.

Watts (1997) describes four different options for the activities and focus of careers centres:

- The integrated guidance model, in which careers services offer continuous guidance to students before enrolment and selection of the course, throughout the course, and during the transition of graduates to the labour market;
- The integrated placement model, in which careers centres offer support when students are deciding on, for example, part–time jobs and work placements;
- The curriculum model, in which careers centres provide support to academic departments in incorporating employability and career management skills into the curriculum;
- The learning organisation model, in which careers centres become part of special educational departments designed to foster the career development of all staff at the institution, as well as students.

Career guidance researchers and practitioners at universities today emphasise that the most effective model for transferring the awareness, knowledge, skills, competences and behaviours necessary to build good employability and career management is the curriculum model.

Because of the special characteristics of study programmes and disciplines, different models of operation and positioning of careers centres have also developed:

- Within professional programmes where it is considered that special professional training is necessary for entry into a profession (e.g. medicine, architecture), academic departments believe that career development is part of their primary responsibility and therefore collaborate more rarely with "external" careers centres.

- Within professional programmes which open the door to several different occupations but which expect the primary occupational activity to be within these professions (e.g. chemistry, psychology), academic departments frequently share the responsibility for career development with careers centres.
- Within "non–professional" programmes, or those that open up a broad spectrum of fields of employment (e.g. history, philosophy), academic departments most often leave career development to careers centres (Watts 2007, 27).

Careers centres in Slovenia: the example of Careers Centres at the University of Ljubljana

The University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, set up its first careers centre in 2008. From relatively modest beginnings this began to develop more intensively in 2010 when it received funding from the European Social Fund. Today the Careers Centres of the University of Ljubljana (CCUL) focus above all on:

- individual career guidance for students and graduates,
- various activities in the form of workshops designed to provide the functional knowledge and skills necessary to be effective in the labour market,
- liaison between students and employers.

Individual activities receive a changing emphasis, depending both on the goals contained within the current call for funding applications that provides the careers centres with the funds to operate, and on the dynamics that are established at individual member institutions (26) of the University of Ljubljana, or their current recognition of the importance of fostering career awareness in students. In this way career development and good employability have already become an important and emphasised component of the study process at those member institutions that have (already traditionally) established good, regular and close cooperative relationships with the business sector for the needs of the more integrated development of their students. On the other hand there are member institutions or academic departments at member institutions which are (still) convinced that the question of the career, career path and employability of their graduates is something that goes beyond and does not concern their work or their mission.

Careers counsellors at the CCUL find, in their work, that students' awareness of the importance of acquiring knowledge and competences in order to enter the labour market and move within it effectively is closely connected with the attitude of their academic mentors towards these areas; students' awareness that career development and good employability are a lifelong project which needs to be planned while still at university, and their active search for and acquisition of all available opportunities for this development, depend, in fact, on the encouragement they receive from their academic mentors and the emphasis they place on it. Accordingly, careers counsellors generally only meet students from faculties and academies that neglect the field of career development when it is time for them to make the transition to the labour market and they are faced with (even greater) helplessness and a lack of effective tools with which to enter the labour market.

As well as the provision of information, individual career counselling involve conversations with students which frequently take the form of coaching, particularly where careers counsellors help students focus on their interests, their activities to date and their already acquired skills, and carry out self–evaluation of previous achievements, of their goals, and find a way to achieve these. Individual self–perception, when it comes to questions of their career (and personal) plans, is poorly developed in Slovene students. It is apparent, not only through career guidance but also through feedback from employers, both in Slovenia and abroad, that UL graduates have good, very competitive professional knowledge but that their generic and, above all, social skills and self–knowledge are poor.

In order to try to raise awareness of the importance of consciously monitoring and evaluating acquired skills and their contribution to building individuals who are as complete and successful as possible, who are able both to formulate and follow their professional goals (among other goals), the CCUL organise annual conferences with guidance staff and secondary school staff. Experience shows that this cooperation needs to be further strengthened and even transferred to lower levels of education.

In order to enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills and competences necessary for effective communication with employers and successful positioning in the labour market, the CCUL organise and run workshops for students. At these workshops, students acquire knowledge and develop their skills in preparing self–presentations, the basis of which is good knowledge of their achievements, knowledge, acquired skills, weaknesses and short–term and long–term goals. The introductory workshops are therefore devoted to a presentation of the content of good

employability and tools for self–evaluation and monitoring own achievements. Later on the workshop participants learn the rules of writing a CV and are introduced to alternative, innovative forms of CV. Research, information and taking into account the expectations of the other is the second starting point for designing and preparing both CVs and covering letters. The covering letter – or addressing another person (employer, business colleague, partner) – is most frequently the first contact that the job seeker establishes with the desired employer or business partner.

The second set of workshops involves familiarising participants with procedures for selecting candidates, job interviews, selection procedures, etc. As well as learning about how such selections are organised, what the procedure is, what candidates can expect at them, what it is worth preparing for, etc., participants are introduced to and given the opportunity to develop the techniques that are necessary for an effective performance and direct self–presentation. Various methods and techniques are used during this learning, ranging from role–play, group and individual work and evaluation to learning about and practising the "elevator pitch" technique.

The elevator pitch – a brief self–presentation statement – is an extremely useful technique that individuals can use in a wide variety of life situations (not only when looking for a job!). The concept of the "elevator pitch" is imported from America and the name reflects the idea that the statement should be delivered in a short amount of time – the time it takes the average elevator (or lift) to carry the boss up to his or her top–floor office. This time restriction is the essence of the elevator pitch; its duration is limited to a minute or two. Like every speech it contains, or should contain, all three modes of persuasion in order to achieve its goal: logos – setting out arguments; ethos – presenting values; and pathos – appealing to emotions. The elevator pitch is focused on a brief self–presentation with the clear intention of motivating the recipient of the pitch to schedule a later, more in–depth meeting. For the elevator pitch to be successful, the individual must have a very clear understanding of his or her own goals and the advantages that ensure success, while on the other hand it is important to know the recipient well and to know what subjects will provoke his or her interest. For this reason the elevator pitch is always a one–off exploit design for a special situation with one specific recipient, and as such cannot be used again or repeated in unaltered form. The CCUL were the first careers service to place this technique in the context of the work of careers centres at universities in Slovenia; it was introduced for the first time in autumn 2012 in the context of the organisation of direct meetings between employers and graduates.

The third area of activity of the CCUL relates to direct liaison between students and employers. The CCUL have developed various forms of liaison: visits to work environments, presentations of employers at UL faculties and academies, and encounters of various kinds, including round–table discussions, conferences, lectures, career days and career fairs at member institutions, "job speed dating" with potential employers, etc. The purpose of events of this kind is to familiarise students with work processes in different work environments, with the nature of work in specific fields, with career possibilities and opportunities within different companies. All of this enables young people to understand whether the knowledge they have acquired during their studies is compatible with requirements and opportunities in real work environments. The activities organised by the CCUL also follow other objectives. One of the most important of these is the establishment of effective social networks. It is essential that young people are able to consciously build, cultivate and expand their contacts (including professional contacts), since this facilitates their entry into work processes. Building and maintaining effective social networks is one of the essential social "soft" skills that students start to build while at university. Important connections include both generational connections – established through involvement and participation in student societies, clubs and organisations, voluntary organisations and activities, etc. – and intergenerational connections – developed through various forms of work and professional collaboration during studies: student jobs, project work, work placements, voluntary work, etc. Social networks and connections are extremely important at the moment of the transition to the labour market and starting a job because employers and partners are looking for individuals who are compatible with their interests not only in terms of the specific professional knowledge needed in their field but also – and more importantly – in terms of value systems and personality. For such qualities to be recognised, however, longer–lasting and (above all) personal contact and cooperation are usually necessary.

The central task of the CCUL is to facilitate the acquisition and development of the key skills which students will need both on their transition to the labour market and throughout their active working life. By offering non–formal forms of learning and opportunities to acquire important functional knowledge and skills, the CCUL communicate awareness of the importance of an active approach and building a career, and the importance of lifelong learning and personal responsibility for maintaining good employability. Through a variety of activities and contents involving the use of various methods and techniques for

transferring knowledge and skills, they help students become aware of their capabilities and strengthen them so that, through a process of lifelong learning, they can find and retain sustainable employment within the labour market and realise their own career goals, contributing through their own creative work to the achievement of higher personal goals while at the same time contributing to the success of their employer, the economy and society as a whole.

Conclusion

Non–formal and informal learning are the most important sources of various types of knowledge, skills, experiences and values and an opportunity to develop key competences that enable the individual to develop a career in a satisfactory way throughout his or her working life and to maintain good employability. Through non–formal and informal forms of learning, individuals acquire in particular those skills, competences, values and personality characteristics which are overlooked by formal education but which are particularly sought after in the labour market. The *social or "soft" skills* of cooperativeness, teamwork, recognition of social trends, responsiveness, adaptability, the *generic, transferable skills* of successful communication, analytical thinking, successful and innovative problem–solving, effective organisation, independent learning and commitment to the *values* of dedication, perseverance, reliability, personal and professional integrity and ethics are those *personal characteristics* that are, at least in the opinion of those looking to employ new, young professionals, (too) rarely present and insufficiently developed in individuals today. It is evident that centres of formal education, with their narrow focus, are insufficient for the achievement of such goals.

Careers centres at universities are spaces of non–formal learning aimed at a specific population, namely future graduates. Their aim is to empower, inform and educate future graduates so that, through a process of lifelong learning, they can find and retain sustainable employment within the labour market and realise their own career goals, contributing through their own creative work to the achievement of higher personal goals while at the same time contributing to the success of society as a whole.

As an example of a careers centre we have presented the work of the Careers Centres of the University of Ljubljana, which have been operating for five years (since 2008) and which, in their development and experiences, have arrived at results similar to those that have prompted the

latest changes in the organisation and work of careers centres at many European universities. Experience shows that at the university level it is important to support (all) different forms of non–formal and informal learning to enable the acquisition and development of key generic (and, in particular, social) skills and competences. In order to bring about changes and success in this field it is necessary, on the one hand, to identify, establish and develop partnership between all key stakeholders – staff at the faculties and academies of the university, students, careers centres and external partners (particularly employers). On the other hand it is necessary to find effective and permanent ways of embedding the concept of good employability into the curricula themselves. In the context of the University environment in Slovenia, the process is all the more complex because non–formal learning and the development of skills and competencies necessary for career development and good employability are (still) understood and frequently rejected as a form of competition for the professional work of university education, namely the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills and competences.

Understanding learning, even at university level, as a process of developing the personality as a whole, is extremely important today, above all because trends for the future point to the dominant importance of such generic competences. Those observers who are seriously engaged in forecasting future trends no longer talk about the (regulated) professions that can be expected to be most interesting from the point of view of employment in the future, but focus instead on competences. It is their assumption that the following ten skills and competences will be of key importance for the next ten years:

1. *sense–making*; ability to determine the deeper meaning or significance of what is being expressed;
2. *social intelligence*; ability to connect to others in a deep and direct way, to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions;
3. *novel & adaptive thinking*; proficiency at thinking and coming up with solutions and responses beyond that which is rote or rule–based;
4. *cross–cultural competence*; ability to operate in different cultural settings;
5. *computational thinking*; ability to translate vast amounts of data into abstract concepts and to understand data–based reasoning;
6. *new–media literacy*; ability to critically assess and develop content that uses new media forms, and to leverage these media for persuasive communication;

7. *transdisciplinarity*; literacy in and ability to understand concepts across multiple disciplines;
8. *design mindset*; ability to represent and develop tasks and work processes for desired outcomes;
9. *cognitive load management*; ability to discriminate and filter information for importance, and to understand how to maximise cognitive functioning using a variety of tools and techniques;
10. *virtual collaboration*; ability to work productively, drive engagement, and demonstrate presence as a member of a virtual team (Davies et al. 2011).

Acquiring and developing such competences represents a challenge for the education system. It is no longer important how and where the individual acquires knowledge and skills, develops competences, and builds a value system and personal characteristics. The development of analytical skills and critical thinking, new–media literacy, experimental and experiential learning, the acquisition and development of soft skills, an ability for independent learning – these are the key goals which the education system (or at least its pinnacle) needs to achieve through its programmes, in order to empower its future graduates to move successfully within the labour market.

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CONTRIBUTORS

António Fragoso works at the University of the Algarve, Faro, Portugal. His research focuses on adult education, community development and social change.
e–mail:aalmeida@ualg.pt

Petra Javrh studied educational science at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. She is currently employed as a research fellow at the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education. Her research focuses on: development of the teacher's professional career, career development, adult literacy, key competences, sustainable development, education of vulnerable groups, educational films and other topics.
e–mail: petra.javrh@acs.si

Polona Kelava studied adult education at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her fields of interest are mainly adult education, vocational education and training and social stratification through education. She works as a research assistant at the Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
e–mail: polona.kelava@guest.arnes.si

Taja Kramberger studied history and historical anthropology in Ljubljana and Koper and has held fellowships in Paris (EHESS, MSH) and Budapest (Collegium Budapest). She publishes articles and books in the fields of cultural and social history (C18th–C20th). She is an elected university teacher and researcher and was editor–in–chief of the multilingual anthropological journal *Monitor ZSA* (2001–2010). She is currently employed at the Educational Research Institute in Ljubljana.
e–mail: taja.kramberger@gmail.com

Nives Ličen is an assistant professor of adult education at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her professional interests include biographical learning, situated learning and non–formal adult education (family life education, community education).
e–mail: nives.licen@guest.arnes.si

Marko Radovan is an assistant professor at the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His main field of research is motivation in education and adult learning.
e–mail: marko.radovan@gmail.com

Drago B. Rotar studied history of art, archaeology, sociology of culture and historical anthropology in Ljubljana and Paris. He is a retired professor of sociology of culture and historical anthropology, a senior research fellow, a former head of the Department of Sociology, Ljubljana and former dean of the ISH Graduate School of Humanities. He is currently working as an independent researcher in Paris.
e–mail: bracorotar@hotmail.com

Klara Skubic Ermenc studied pedagogy and English language in Ljubljana, Slovenia. She is an associate professor of comparative pedagogy at the University of Ljubljana. She is a consultant for the development of vocational education and training in Slovenia and a member of the government's expert team for the development of the Slovenian Qualifications Framework.
e–mail: klara.ermenc@gmail.com

Tadej Vidmar studied classical philology and pedagogy (educational sciences) in Ljubljana and Leipzig. He is a professor of history of education and the evolution of educational concepts at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.
e–mail: tadej.vidmar@ff.uni-lj.si

Igor Ž. Žagar studied philosophy, sociology and linguistics in Ljubljana, Paris and Antwerp. He is a professor of rhetoric and argumentation and a senior research fellow (head of the Centre for Discourse Studies) at the Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
e–mail: igor.zzagar@gmail.com

Tihomir Žiljak studied political sciences in Zagreb, Croatia. He is head of the Department of Lifelong Learning, Development and EU Programmes at the Public Open University of Zagreb and an assistant professor of education policy and Europeanisation of public policies.
e–mail: tziljak@gmail.com

Sabina Žnidaršič Žagar works as a careers counsellor at the Careers Centres of the University of Ljubljana. She is a historian and assistant professor. Her main research field is women's history in the 19th and 20th centuries.
e–mail: sabina.znidarsic4@gmail.com

EDITORS

Igor Ž. Žagar studied philosophy, sociology, and linguistics in Ljubljana, Paris, and Antwerp. He received his doctoral degree in sociology of culture from the University of Ljubljana. He is a professor of rhetoric and argumentation (University of Primorska) and a Senior Research Fellow (head of the Centre for Discourse Studies) at the Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia. He has lectured in Belgium, the United States, Italy, China, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain, Russia, Romania, Poland and France. His interests lie in pragmatics (speech act theory, (critical) discourse analysis), philosophy of language, argumentation and rhetoric. He is the author/co–author and editor/co–editor of twelve books and more than a hundred articles.

Address: Educational Research Institute, Gerbičeva 62, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.

e–mail: igor.zzagar@gmail.com, www: www.igorzagar.net

Polona Kelava is a research assistant in the Centre for Evaluation Studies at the Educational Research Institute and a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Education, University of Maribor. Her main research areas are adult education and vocational education and training. In her research she deals mainly with the recognition of non–formal and informal learning and social inclusion based on educational attainment. She is the author of scholarly and other journal articles in these fields and the co–author of a monograph.

Address: Educational Research Institute, Gerbičeva 62, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.

e–mail: polona.kelava@guest.arnes.si

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