

THE TRANSFORMATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) IN THE BALTIC STATES - SURVEY OF REFORMS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Frank Bönning



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THE TRANSFORMATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING (VET) IN THE BALTIC STATES - SURVEY
OF REFORMS AND DEVELOPMENTS

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The Transformation of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the Baltic States - Survey of Reforms and Developments

by

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INTRODUCTION BY THE SERIES EDITORS

The enlargement of the European Union (EU) has brought with it many diverse challenges including those relating to education and training for the world of work and skills development for employability and citizenship.

When it comes to vocational education and training (VET), important matters which are attracting increasing attention include: identifying ways of best facilitating and monitoring what has become the greater ease of mobility of skilled workers across national borders, with particular reference to accommodating a quality assurance dimension; the importance of developing implementable, even-handed qualifications and training frameworks to facilitate accurate and fair-minded comparability of occupational categories and vocational training qualifications between countries in Europe; and coping with the formidable challenges associated with developing a workable European Union VET policy.

As a result of the so-called *Bologna Process* (and the *Bologna Declaration* of June 1999), countries in Europe have sought to lay a sound and sustainable foundation for an accurate and fair-minded comparison of educational systems in Europe (and the rest of the world) in order to facilitate, amongst other things, the mobility and equitable treatment of students and research staff moving between countries. A cornerstone of the *Bologna Declaration* is the adoption of a system of easily comprehensible and comparable degrees in order to promote the employability of European citizens.

In addition, since the *Lisbon Council* of 2000, the development and monitoring of VET has been placed high on European Policy Agendas; and the *Copenhagen Declaration* of 2002 has sought to increase European co-operation in the area of TVET. Significantly, the newest countries to join the EU, including the Baltic states, are amongst the most enthusiastic proponents of the *Copenhagen Process*.

This important book of readings provides information and useful insights regarding the reform and development of vocational education and training in the Baltic states, in the relevant light of the developments referred to above. After an introductory section which examines the standing of VET in Europe, the book

goes on to survey VET and VET teacher training in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The concluding section of the book examines international cooperation in VET degree programmes, including the development of a Masters Degree for VET which is recognised both regionally within Europe, and internationally. In fact, the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Bonn Germany, is itself playing a leadership role in developing such a Masters programme, in collaboration with the United TVET Network on Innovation and Professional Development (UNIP), having to date co-sponsored planning meetings in both Tianjin, China (with INWENT and UNIP, in 2005), and Oslo, Sweden (with UNIP in 2006).

Although this book focuses specifically on the situation in the Baltic states, the lessons learnt provide insights which are likely to be valuable to other countries. This is not just for countries in Europe but also those in other parts of the world, as they seek to modernize, strengthen and upgrade their systems of TVET to cope with the demanding challenges of the 21st Century, creating a most effective bridge between education and the world of work in a world where there is increasing mobility between countries.

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PREFACE

The enlargement of the European Union and issues related to it are a central aspect of European policy. The challenges faced are diverse and immense. The development of Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a major concern of the Lisbon strategy for making Europe a prosperous place in which to live and work in the 21st century.

Since the Lisbon Council met in 2000, the development of VET has been very high on European policy agendas. It has been agreed to step up European co-operation in this area. This process began with the Copenhagen Declaration in 2002. The newest member states of the EU—among them the Baltic states—are now involved in this Copenhagen process and are a source of enormous (human) potential that can greatly enrich Europe.

The concept of the EU VET policy is outlined in the first chapter of this publication. Chapters two and three form the core of the publication and describe the characteristics of VET systems, VET programmes, and approaches to VET teacher training in the Baltic states. Chapter four expands this perspective and illustrates aspects of internationalisation in higher education. In particular, a joint degree programme to qualify VET staff is detailed. The internationalisation of degree programmes is a serious challenge for university faculties. The global dimension in teaching international degree programmes is discussed in the final part of this book.

The academic community is aware of the important implications of the development of VET in the new member states of the European Union. As the Baltic states have enjoyed special attention in European VET policy, the reforms in VET and its structures are the subject of critical debate in this book.

We hope that this book will be of service to both researchers and lecturers in the study of VET in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as for the broader context of internationalisation in VET and degree programme delivery.

Magdeburg
July 2004

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1. Higher Education in Europe on the Threshold of the 21st Century

Since the middle of the 1990s, Europe has laid a foundation with the so-called *Bologna Process* that enables a comparison of educational systems in Europe and the rest of the world. The tools for doing that are offered in the *Bologna Process*. A starting point of the ‘Bologna Process’ was a ‘strong heterogeneity of the national education systems, which were perceived more and more as an obstacle for the wished-for mobility of students and research staff’ (Keller, 2004).

Before the *Bologna Declaration* in June 1999 came the *Sorbonne Declaration* (‘Joint Declaration on Harmonisation of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System’)¹ on 25 May 1998. This was passed, on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the Sorbonne University, by the Ministers of higher education of the big four in Europe: France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy.

The wording of the Declaration uses the idea of the common European Higher Education Area for the first time. The aim is to improve student mobility within Europe. Only through this mobility can the growing demands on students and academics be met with continuously developing career and education opportunities. In reference to hundreds of years of the European university tradition, the Declaration asks for a ‘Europe of knowledge’ (‘... Europe is not only that of the Euro, of the bank and the economy, it must be a Europe of knowledge as well’).²

The *Sorbonne Declaration* reflected these demands for the first time, which later became an integral part of the *Bologna Process*:

¹ ‘Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system’. Available at http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/main_documents/.

² *ibid.*

- a continuous convergence of the overall framework of degrees in an open European area for higher education;
- a common degree system for undergraduates (Bachelor's degree) and graduates (Master's and doctoral degree);
- facilitating student and teacher mobility (i.e., students should spend at least one semester abroad); removing obstacles to mobility and improving the recognition of degrees and academic qualifications.³

The *Sorbonne Declaration* closes with a plea for other countries in Europe (members and non-members of the EU) to join the goals expressed in it. Within 1 year, the *Sorbonne Declaration* was signed by 25 nations.

1 The Bologna Declaration 19 June 1999

The *Bologna Declaration* ('19 June 1999')⁴ signed by 29 European Ministers of Higher Education was in line with the Sorbonne Declaration. The Declaration pointed out that a 'Europe of Knowledge' is an important factor for social and human growth. The importance of education and educational co-operation for the development of stable, peaceful and democratic societies is acknowledged as being paramount. The Ministers emphasised that the improvement of the international competitiveness and global attractiveness of the European higher education system should be the central point of a homogeneous European Higher Education Area. The Ministers agreed on some central issues which should improve compatibility and comparability among European higher education institutions. A catalogue of six measures was passed, which was meant to be the cornerstone for a common European Higher Education Area:

- Adoption of a system of easily comprehensible and comparable degrees, through the implementation of the diploma supplement, in order to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.
- Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first-cycle studies, lasting a minimum of 3 years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be an entrance qualification to the European labour market. The second cycle should lead to the master's and/or doctorate degree.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999. 'Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education'. Available at http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/main_documents.

- Establishment of a system of credits—as in the ECTS system—as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by the universities concerned.
- Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement. For students, there should be particular attention paid to access to study and training opportunities and related services; for teachers, researchers and administrative staff. There should be recognition of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training.
- Promotion of European co-operation in ‘quality assurance’ with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.
- Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.⁵

The ultimate aim of the process is to establish a European Higher Education area by 2010. The intended goals are to be implemented by the signatory states, although they are not legally binding.

The Ministers agreed to a meeting in Prague 2 years later, in order to assess the achievements and to consider the next steps. The result of the *Bologna Conference* was a series of follow-up conferences. In the framework of the follow-up structures, a series of national conferences were held in the participating countries to discuss the objectives of the *Bologna Declaration*.

2 The Prague Summit 18–19 May 2001

Two years after signing the *Bologna Declaration*, the Ministers of 33 European countries met in Prague in May 2001 in order to discuss developments so far and to agree upon future priorities for the European Higher Education Area. The choice of Prague for this meeting was symbolic of the Minister’s desire to involve all of Europe in this process. Prior to the signing of the *Prague Communiqué* (‘Towards the European Higher Education Area’)⁶ three other European nations, namely Croatia, Turkey and Cyprus had been accepted into the Bologna Process. Lichtenstein was acknowledged retroactively

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ ‘Towards the European higher education area. Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education in Prague on May 19th 2001’. Available at http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/main_documents.

as a signatory country. As a result, there were 33 countries participating in the Bologna Process.

The *Prague Communiqué* underlined in strong terms the importance of higher education for democratic values and the values of a diversity of cultures and languages, as well as a diversity of higher education systems.

Besides affirming the *Bologna Declaration*, more concrete resolutions were agreed upon. In reference to two meetings of the European University Association (EUA) on 29–30 March 2001 in Salamanca, and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) in Göteborg 24/25 March 2001, the European Ministers responsible for higher education appreciated the active involvement of those organisations for their active role in the implementation of the Bologna Process. The recognition of student as competent and constructive partners, as well as the emphasis on co-operation with higher education systems was an important step forward in Prague.

In the *Prague Communiqué*, the Ministers called upon existing organisations and networks such as NARIC and ENIC to guarantee, at the institutional, national and European level, a fair and efficient recognition process.⁷ The Ministers noted that in many signatory countries the Bachelor's, Master's and comparable degrees were already established at universities or other higher education institutions. Together with the establishment of a credit system, which guarantees a flexible recognition of qualifications and therefore facilitates student's access to the European labour market, the Ministers stressed again the importance of common regulations for these qualifications. Concerning the student's demand for better integration of the social aspects of the process, the *Prague Communiqué* makes reference to different European Community programmes, i.e., the *Mobility Action Plan* (Nice, 2000).

Another central point of the *Prague Communiqué* is the 'quality assurance' in European higher education. It has encouraged a closer co-operation between recognition and quality assurance networks. The Ministers encourage universities and other higher education institutions to disseminate examples of their best experiences and to design scenarios of mutual acceptance of accreditation mechanisms.⁸

To increase the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with a 'European' content is an essential point, which should lead to a mutually recognised joint degree.

A new element of the *Prague Communiqué* is the fact, that lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and new

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

technologies in the future Europe.⁹ Last but not least the promotion of the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area for students from Europe and the whole world is underlined.

Finally, the Ministers agreed to continue their co-operation. Nations, which so far had not been part of the process, were encouraged to participate. The next meeting was to be held in September 2003 in Berlin. As in all other conferences the process was to be reviewed and further directions for the next steps were to be defined.

3 The Berlin Conference 19–21 September 2003

As agreed in Prague, the fourth meeting of the European Ministers responsible for higher education took place in Berlin in September 2003. The Ministers emphasised the importance of all elements of the *Bologna Process* for establishing a European Higher Education Area and stressed the need to intensify the efforts on the institutional, national and European level.

In the preamble of the *Berlin Communiqué* ('Realising the European Higher Education Area')¹⁰ the essential decisions of previous years were reaffirmed and positively evaluated. The involvement of the students of higher education institutions, and of other networks, was considered by the Ministers to be indispensable. This must continue. Similar to the *Prague Communiqué*, the social aspects of the process were also underlined in the *Berlin Communiqué* but without mentioning concrete measures for realisation. New is the reference to the *Lisbon Convention* from April 1997 on the recognition of degrees in higher education by other countries on the basis of mutual acceptance.

The *Berlin Communiqué* contained the goals of Bologna and Prague, but the document has some new regulations. The Ministers have defined priorities for the next 2 years. The focus is on: quality assurance, two-cycle system, as well as recognition of degrees and periods of studies. Each of these three points was fixed with special goals:

- Quality Assurance:
 - As agreed upon in the 'Prague Communiqué', quality assurance should be continued on the institutional, national and European level. The responsibility for the quality assurance shall be with the higher education

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ 'Realising the European Higher Education Area'. Communiqué of the Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003. Available at http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/main_documents.

institutions yet common standards for the quality assurance and the participating institutions shall be developed on the national and European level.

- The Ministers agreed that by 2005 national quality assurance should include:
 - A definition of the responsibilities of the institutions involved;
 - Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results;
 - A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures, international participation, co-operation and networking.¹¹
- The two-cycle system:
 - The degree system on the national and international level has to follow comparable frameworks: the first-cycle degrees should offer access to second-cycle programs and second-cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies. As a consequence, the Ministers have committed to implementing the two-cycle system by 2005. Furthermore they have underlined the progress of accepting the new qualifications within institutions and the labour market.
- Promotion of mobility:
 - Again the Ministers stressed the importance of mobility for the realisation of the European Higher Education Area. The transferability of national loans and grants to other countries should be guaranteed.
- Establishing of a system of credits:
 - The introduction of a uniform credit-point system shall be continued.
- Recognition of degrees: adoption of a system of easy understandable and comparable degrees:
 - Every student graduating as of 2005 should receive the diploma supplement automatically and free of charge.
- Promotion of the European dimension in higher education:
 - Beside the decision in Prague concerning the establishing of modules, courses and curricula with a 'European' content, the development of common study programs shall enable the students to study abroad. Therefore, a sufficient opportunity of language acquirement should be guaranteed.
- Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area:
 - The attractiveness and opening of the European Higher Education Area shall be promoted further. In this context, the ministers confirm their readiness to continue the development of scholarships and programmes for students from third party countries.

¹¹ *ibid.*

- Lifelong Learning:
 - The Ministers underlined the importance to increase the possibilities for lifelong learning at the higher education level and make appropriate use of ESCT credits.
- European Research Area—the third cycle:
 - The Ministers consider it necessary to go beyond the present focus on the two main cycles of higher education to include the doctoral level as the third cycle in the ‘Berlin Communiqué’. Therefore, they call for an increased mobility at the doctoral and post-doctoral levels. Thus the European Higher Education Area shall develop into a European research area.¹²

Finally the Ministers welcomed Albania, Andorra, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vatican City, Russia, Serbia, Montenegro and ‘the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’ as new members of the Bologna Process.¹³ This has increased the number of member states to 40.

The Ministers agreed to next meet Bergen, Norway in 2005. They asked the *Bologna Follow-Up-Group* (BFUG) to co-ordinate activities for advancing the Bologna Process as indicated in the themes and actions covered by the ‘Berlin Communiqué’, and to report on them in the next ministerial meeting. As previously, seminars will constitute an important working mode in the period from 2003 to 2005. One item asked for by the Ministers at the Berlin Conference was the development of a set of standards, procedures and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education. Further, the Ministers asked for a survey of the social and economic situation in member countries, and charged the BFUG with organising a stocktaking process in time for their summit in 2005.¹⁴

4 A Critical Review of the Bologna Process from a German Perspective

Five years after the signing of the Bologna Declaration, numerous alterations have taken place in the national higher education system (alterations that should help to create a European Higher Education Area). In German higher education institutions, the implementation of the Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees indicates a reform that has already shown considerable changes in structure and content in the German higher education system. Germany has been characterised by a lengthy undergraduate period, and predominantly focused on final

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

exams (Diploma, Magister, State Examination), coupled with the freedom of study and teaching. Generally speaking, German students take a longer time to finish their degree than students in other countries.

One consequence of the Bologna process was the establishment of the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Germany. Furthermore it has established a common European credit transfer system (ECTS), the creation of modules and courses, the internationalisation of curricula, a new regulation of accreditation, and is meant to establish efficient co-operation with the labour market.

The realisation of these reforms resulted in a decentralisation that corresponds to the German federal structure. That means, that all regulatory processes for the implementation of the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs are restricted to an indispensable minimum, and the higher education institutions are chiefly responsible for all decisions concerning the development of new study programmes.

German higher education institutions have formulated the ambitious goal of reorganising all study courses in the undergraduate and graduate programs by no later than 2007. Specifically, this means changing the German higher education system to a system of degrees, where the first undergraduate degree (Bachelor) qualifies one for the labour market after 3 or 4 years, and the second graduate degree (Master's) is gained after a regular study period of a further 1–2 years. This two-cycle study system contains a credit-point system as well as exams. The German *Wissenschaftsrat* (Higher Education Council) recommends designing the undergraduate courses in such a way that the acquisition of professional, methodological and social skills can be facilitated. The undergraduate degree enables graduates of universities to enter a graduate programme, which is the prerequisite for a PhD programme. Undergraduate and graduate courses are to be evaluated after a test phase (Wissenschaftsrat, 2000).

In summer 2004, approximately 2000 Bachelor's and Master's degrees were being offered at German universities. In 1998, in comparison, there were only 100 such courses offered. Despite this impressive increase, these types of courses still make up today only 18% of all degree courses. At the Universities of Applied Sciences, one sees a different picture. Here the share of Bachelor's and Master's degrees has gone up from 17% in 1998 to 38% in 2004 (Jahn, 2004).

Notwithstanding this development, the acceptance of these new degrees by students, teachers and business people has been relatively limited. The reasons for this resistance, according to critics, have been the deficiency in information as well as a lack transparency of the new courses.

Neither the students nor the companies are familiar with the quality of the Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

It cannot be predicted when and for which subjects the universities and other higher education institutions will implement the undergraduate and graduate final degrees. Because of the lack information concerning the learning material, companies cannot judge, whether the Bachelor's and Master's graduates have received sufficient knowledge in theory and praxis.

Subsequently it is not possible for the companies to develop new trainee programs for graduates from universities or other higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the unification of the German higher education system is made more difficult, since each university follows a different Bachelor's and Master's concept, i.e., some universities offer a Master's final degree without having a Bachelor's degree preceding it. At other universities, one must do an internship in order to get an undergraduate degree (the Bachelor's). Again there are other universities which do not insist on an internship. Some universities only offer a Bachelor's degree, others a Master's degree. It is not yet known, what benefit a Master's degree offers in comparison to the *Diplom*. This entire process does necessarily contribute to the transparency of academic degrees, for either students or potential employers.

Another critical aspect in the Bologna Process is the overregulation in academic bureaucracy. Critics see a limitation to the freedom of research and teaching, whereas advocates stress a better basic education in the undergraduate courses. A professional specialisation for students is not possible until the Master's level.

Since the Bachelor's degree is considered to be sufficient qualification for a profession, many students finish their education at this point. However further qualification in some professions may be necessary. The reduction of the length of study is a current political issue, due to financial strains on the budget.¹⁵

It is further argued that the growing regulation has negatively affected the so-called soft skills (i.e., organisational talent, team spirit, individual responsibility). Learning these skills has been considered a critical aspect by private businesses.

To summarise, the Bologna Process is characterised by a strong focus on the economic efficiency of higher education systems. The establishment of European Higher Education sector is restricted to the higher education course system, focusing chiefly on course structuring, transferability and recognition of academic qualification.

On the other hand, questions of teaching and research, financial aspects of higher education or support of the new academic generation are hardly considered (Keller, 2004).

¹⁵ <http://web.uni-muenster.de/asta/hochschulpolitik/internationalisierung>.

In connection with this, the question arises whether and how the Bologna process, in its limited field of activity, can bring about a common European Higher Education Framework.

5 Literature

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2. Lisbon, Bruges, Copenhagen: Milestones Towards a European Vocational Education and Training Sector—A Critical Survey of the Current Situation

1 The Concept of the Copenhagen Declaration

The central question of how to make the EU more competitive in relation to its major contenders—the USA and Japan—has been frequently discussed. In March 2000, at the Lisbon European Council, this was one of the major issues. These discussions lead to the declaration:

the Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. (Lisbon European Council, 2000:2)

The *Presidential Conclusion* also included the recommendation of measures for reaching this strategic goal. Besides the traditional economic provisions, the need to invest in people was clearly addressed. A series of measures related to the systems of VET were subsequently mentioned. This clearly implies a new attention on vocational education and training. 'For the first time in the history of EU summits, education and training has been described as a major tool for implementing a strategic goal' (Fredriksson, 2003:523). Before the Lisbon Council, education had never been in the centre of EU policy. Fredriksson concludes that the widespread hesitation among EU members is based on the reluctance to transfer any power in education to a European level. The Lisbon European Council initiated a new era in which education in general has grabbed the spotlight at European level.

The 2001 meeting of vocational general directors in Bruges started a process that has the overall objective of increasing the quality and general understanding of vocational education and training. The European Council decided to develop this initiative further in Barcelona, in March 2002. The EU Education Ministers agreed on a resolution aimed at enhancing European cooperation in this matter in November 2002. A month later in December 2002, the Ministers of Education of the EU member states as well as the labour organisations of EU member states—including the candidate members in the east European expansion in 2004—all signed the so-called *Copenhagen Declaration*. The *Copenhagen Declaration* reflected the objectives of the previous declaration. The signatories committed themselves to implementing what is now widely known as the *Copenhagen Process*.

The concept of the *Bologna Process*, which focuses on higher education, was transferred to the sector of VET. The *Copenhagen Process* is based upon the model of Bologna. Both processes, Bologna and Copenhagen, are based on the subsidiary principle and on voluntary involvement, which can be best described as a ‘bottom-up’ approach.

In brief, the Copenhagen Process pursues the following major objectives: the development of increased cooperation in the area of vocational education and training in order to promote mutual trust, the transparency and recognition of qualifications, the establishment of a foundation for increased mobility and the facilitation of lifelong learning.

These major objectives are summarised by (European Commission, 2002:2):

- The European dimension in vocational education and training.
- Transparency, information and guidance.
- Recognition of competences and qualifications.
- Quality assurance.

These key elements of the Copenhagen Declaration are explained in greater depth below.

European dimension in vocational education and training is essential for the further development of vocational education and training. Thus, the cooperation between European providers of vocational education and training and other institutions (e.g., legislative) have to be strengthened. A close cooperation will facilitate mobility at a European level and finally contribute to the enhancement of a European profile in vocational education and training.

Transparency, information and guidance are key factors for a ‘European market of vocational education and labour’. Instruments for such objectives are the European curriculum vitae, diploma supplements, a common European framework of reference for languages, and the so-called ‘Europass’.

The model of the *European curriculum vitae* was developed to provide a comprehensive standardised overview of education attainment and the work experience of an individual.

Diploma supplements are designed to give a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies successfully completed. The supplement contains a detailed description of the qualification acquired by the holder. It provides information on: skills and competences acquired, the range of occupations available, the awarding and accreditation institution, level of the certificate, the different ways of obtaining the certificate and the entry requirements and access opportunities to the next level of education. However, it is not a substitute for the original qualification and does not automatically guarantee acceptance.

European Framework of Reference for Languages is an approach to provide a practical tool for setting clear standards in an internationally comparable manner. This framework establishes a foundation for the international recognition of language qualifications. Consequently, it serves to facilitate educational and occupational mobility. It describes the qualifications necessary for communication in foreign languages, the related knowledge and skills of language communication. Moreover, this framework seeks to facilitate a definition of teaching objectives and learning methods. It also provides tools for the assessment of proficiency. It is also designed to become a key reference document in language certification.

Europass is an approach to documenting the professional/occupational career of an individual. Any training attended and completed, as well as skills acquired during a period of work experience in a European country are recorded. It does not necessarily lead to formal accreditation. This standard format is intended to ensure a consistent framework for the recognition of skills by training providers and employers throughout Europe.

Recognition of competences and qualifications is an essential element to promote a common 'European market of vocational education and training and labour'. It calls for consistency for common principles for certification, including a credit transfer system for VET.

A European Credit Transfers System (ECTS) has already been successfully implemented in higher education. Inspired by the success of the ECTS, it is intended to establish a comparable system for the sector of vocational education and training. Furthermore, the cooperative development of training courses, or modules, at the business or civil service level should awake significant attention. It is envisioned that mutually recognised qualifications will be developed. Another major objective is the development of common principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The aim is a common set of principles to ensure compatibility between different countries.

A European vocational education and training sector clearly demands *quality assurance*. Common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training are of paramount importance. This can come about through quality guidelines and quality checklists.

The single elements outlined above are meant to support transparency, information and thus facilitate the occupational and geographical mobility of citizens in Europe. VET is no longer simply a national issue. Cross-boarder mobility will significantly increase through EU enlargement. Therefore, the need for a ‘common currency’ in vocational education and training that is addressed in the *Copenhagen Declaration*.

A look at the concepts and objectives of the *Copenhagen Declaration* reveals an obvious correspondence with the *Bologna Declaration*.

A Europe of knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space. (Bologna Process Committee, 1999:1)

2 Critical Survey of the Current Situation

Missing Mobility in Vocational Education and Training

The role of vocational education and training (VET) was addressed and strengthened by the Copenhagen Declaration. Significant efforts have been made to improve the European profile of vocational education and training. Furthermore, the Declaration’s focus has been set on assessing the progress made towards a European VET sector.

The current situation is documented in the Commission’s report ‘Education & Training 2010—The success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms’ (‘A Joint Interim Report on the Implementation of the Detailed Work Programme on the Follow-up of the Objectives of Education and Training Systems in Europe’). The authors summarise and reflect on those issues which seem to be important in the context of the present work. In this context ‘missing mobility in vocational education and training’, ‘shortage of qualified teaching and training staff’ and ‘reluctant participation in lifelong learning’ are discussed.

In the past, the EU has focused greatly on mobility in education and in vocational education and training. As part of this concern a number of initiatives have been launched to make sure those qualifications and diplomas are recognised among all member states. Despite this, the participation in VET, among teaching/training staff, is still very limited and is regarded as highly

insufficient. In 2002, only 40,000 people participated in the *Leonardo da Vinci* programme. Approximately 55,000 teachers benefited from mobility grants. It was concluded that the persistence of a number of barriers lead to this inadequate interest in mobility schemes. Obstacles such as legal and administrative barriers (i.e., social protection, taxation, recognition of study periods, recognition of qualifications for professional purposes) inhibit European mobility. Furthermore, the lack of funding and the lack of an inadequate organisational framework obstruct mobility. Very few member states have defined strategies for mobility and coordination structures. The need to increase the level and quality of mobility in VET is an absolute necessity.

Shortage of Qualified Teaching and Training Staff

It was estimated that by 2015 more than 1 million primary and secondary school teachers will have to be recruited. This vast demand for teaching staff in the majority of member countries will challenge the structures of teacher training. Despite the great need of teachers and trainers, these professions enjoy a very limited popularity in many countries. Some will face a major shortage of qualified teachers and trainers. Supportive career structures and continuing training measures to prepare teachers for their changing roles will be crucial in the future. The situation culminates in the question of how to attract and retain staff for teaching professions. The desired success of the reforms undertaken depends directly on the quality of the education and the training staff. It is apparent that member states must implement measures and practices to make the teacher/trainer profession more attractive. This includes measures not only to recruit talented candidates, but also retain them in the long run. The development of attractive working conditions and adequate career opportunities is essential.

Reluctant Participation in Lifelong Learning

Another difficult issue to be dealt with is how to make 'lifelong learning' a part of everyone's lives. In the EU document on 'lifelong learning' (European Commission, 2001), it is argued that the investment in 'lifelong learning' has to be raised significantly. Even if one agrees that the financial responsibility for 'lifelong learning' has to be shared between states, companies and individuals, it still means that money for this has to be found. The crux of the problem is that the EU is not in the position to interfere with the financial issues of individual states and determine what investment in lifelong learning they have to make. 'Obviously, the key problem here is not which structure to create, but where to find the money to do it' (Fredriksson, 2003:540).

However, a knowledge-based society demands from the people that their qualifications be continuously updated. The analysis of the situation in the member states offers evidence that lifelong learning is still underdeveloped. Shortcomings in the countries' strategies are to be addressed. These shortcomings result from the concern of certain job requirements and emphasis on the unemployed and those who lack training. This is understandable, but it does not constitute a lifelong learning strategy accessible to everyone. It is the objective of the EU to achieve an annual rate of 12.5% of participation in further education and training by 2010. This requires the special attention of all member states. The calculated participation rate in lifelong learning for 2002 was 8.5% in the EU. Lifelong learning requires special attention as the participation rate has remained stagnant over the last few years in comparison to a steady rise in the late 1990s.

The issues addressed above indicate the need for further action. However, it has to be acknowledged that the *Copenhagen Declaration* has given an impetus to European cooperation, in order to strengthen VET. A proposal for a uniform European framework for transparency in qualifications (Europass) has been developed. A common quality assurance framework, including a set of agreed-upon criteria, has been discussed. Further, the foundations for a credit transfer system in VET are now established. It is hoped that a VET credit transfer system will increase European mobility. Notwithstanding the progress of these initiatives, tremendous effort is required to improve the status (i.e., the 'public image') of the vocational route. Vocational education is still facing the challenge of the systematic educational/training differences. At the same time various sectors grapple with a serious 'skill shortage'. A special effort is required to increase the attractiveness of vocational education.

3 A Survey of the Situation in the Baltic States

The EU has set itself the eager goal to become the world's leading 'knowledge society' by 2010. This goal was set in Lisbon in 2000. The achievement of this ambitious goal is very high on the political agenda of the EU. Member states are working towards it by reorienting their VET systems. However, when the Lisbon Council set the goal, the number of EU countries was 15. By 2010 it can be expected that this number will grow to 28. The deadline of 2010 requires a special investment in VET by 'old' and 'new' member states, as well as the candidate countries (de Rooij, 2004).

For a period of time, reform of VET in the acceding countries (now, new member states) aimed to develop their VET to a standard comparable to that of

the ‘old’ member states. However, little effort was made to truly work together on a common European VET framework (de Rooij, 2004). The Lisbon Council has set new priorities. The demand to meet targets for almost twice as many countries has raised the stakes for VET in current and future member states.

In the early 1990s the *Tempus* programme was launched. It was designed to promote cooperation in higher education with countries of the former Eastern Block. In the late 1990s, the EU’s education programmes such as *Socrates* and *Leonardo* were extended to the accession states. The *European Training Foundation* developed a network of *national observatories* (watch-dog committees) in the countries concerned. Its analytic work culminated in a set of publications identifying key indicators of labour market developments and progress reports of the reform movements.

In 1990, the acceding countries for EU membership (of the former Eastern European Soviet block) launched significant reforms to restructure their VET systems. The results of this reform movement have been impressive; particularly when one considers that the starting date was only 1989.

Among the former accession states (now ‘new member’ states as of May 2004) are the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. They have enjoyed special attention because they occupy an important geographically strategic position. Since the enlargement of the EU (**European Commission**, 2004), they are now serving as ‘outposts’ to the East.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are three neighbouring countries that have shared a recent common history: 22 years of independence after the First World War, occupation by the Soviets in 1940, occupation by Germany in 1941, occupation again by the Russians in 1944 and finally reestablishment of independence in 1990.

‘Soon after regaining their independence, it became clear that cooperation in the area of VET was absolutely necessary between the Baltic States in order to ensure the mobility of the workforce’ (Neudorf, Krusts and Vincentas, 1999). A result of this awareness was the ‘Agreement on the Creation of a Common Educational Space in General Upper Secondary Education and Vocational (up to the Higher Education Level) Education with the Baltic States’, which was signed in 1998. In 1999 a further step was taken with the ‘Cesis Agreement’. Mutual recognition of school-leaving certificates was agreed upon as well as cooperation in general education, including VET. A very solid result of this cooperation is the comparative analysis of the different VET systems in the Baltic States. This survey was designed to facilitate cooperation in the field of education.

The reform of VET systems in the Baltic States started in the early 1990s. When developing the framework for their VET systems, EU standards were

considered. This is particularly evident in the educational systems of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The development of VET systems, in accordance with European standards, leads to a favourable position of these countries' vocational qualifications. Whereas other European VET systems, which evolved more traditionally, appear to be at a disadvantage. For example, German vocational qualifications are particularly disadvantaged. According to the *European Level System, Dual Vocational Education Qualifications* awarded in Germany after 3 years of training are classified as Level 2.

Despite reforms, the three Baltic States still face a number of problems in the area of VET. In particular its negative image is an impediment to its further development throughout these states.

As vocational education and training do not general enjoy high esteem, it is not surprising that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are lacking qualified VET teaching and management staff. These deficits are depicted *inter alia* in greater detail in Parts II and III.

4 Conclusion

The *Lisbon Summit* and the *Copenhagen Declaration* are in some ways a breakthrough to a European vocational education policy. Much emphasis has been given to vocational education by a series of initiatives to foster a European VET sector.

Indisputably, VET is one significant element in a Europe's strategy to become more competitive. The main objective of the European VET policy is the recognition of VET qualifications in the EU in order to support the European labour market. The *Lisbon Council* and the *Copenhagen Declaration* added a new dimension to European VET policy.

The recognition of qualifications may be achieved without many changes in national VET policy. However, the objectives set by the Copenhagen Declaration such as quality assurance in VET treads upon national educational autonomy to a great extent. Few countries are prepared to accept far-reaching European interference in national educational policy.

The new EU member states have launched significant reforms to modernise their VET systems and have taken European standards into consideration which, of course, already signifies a form of interference in national education policy. The new member states, including the Baltic States, have made enormous progress to develop their systems in line with European standards. Thus, they may well serve as an example for a pro-European dimension of national VET policy.

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3. Vocational Education and Training in Estonia: Reform Processes and Tendencies

1 Political, Economic and Social Background

Political Developments Since 1990

After 47 years under Soviet occupation a new national awakening began in Estonia in 1987. Protests against the Soviet system became more open and frequent. In October and November of 1988, more than 860,000 people signed a petition protesting amendments to the USSR constitution that would have increased centralised power. Finally, on 16 November 1988 the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) passed a declaration of sovereignty.

In May 1990, the ESSR was officially renamed the Republic of Estonia, leading to a rapid succession of dramatic events in 1991 that culminated with the re-establishment of independence in Estonia and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Estonia declared independence on 20 August 1991 and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) recognised Estonian independence on 24 August. In addition, the United States renewed diplomatic ties shortly thereafter on 2 September. The United Nations (UN) accepted the Baltic States as new members on 17 September 1991. The first president of the re-established republic was chosen by parliament in October 1992.

After regaining independence from Soviet control, Estonia made steady progress towards their goal of accession into the European Union (EU). In 1993,

Estonia was accepted as a full member of the Council of Europe and in 1995, the Free Trade agreement with the EU went into effect. Also, Estonia signed an Association Agreement with the EU, and submitted a formal application for EU membership. In 1997, Estonia was invited to begin EU accession negotiations which subsequently followed in April 1998. Through a referendum on 14 September 2003, the people of Estonia gave the final 'yes' for accession to the European Union. Estonia, together with 10 other Eastern-European countries, became a full member of the European Union on 1 May 2004. The membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organizations (NATO) has also been accepted Education Sub-Sector Review, 2003.

Economic Developments Since 1990

The current economic situation in Estonia is well indicated by the following details:

- Inflation has been fuelled mainly by the internal and external price convergence that came with price liberalisation in 1992.
- Changes in the consumer quality and structure have also had a significant impact on prices.
- Despite a steady decrease in inflation from 1995 to 1998, it has remained relatively high because of certain domestic factors and a slow convergence with world market prices.
- In 1999 inflation was 3.3%, significantly the lowest ever. In 2001 inflation increased to 5.8%. In 2002 the consumer price index (CPI) showed a decrease of 3.6%.

Economic developments in 2000 were influenced by favourable external environments and growth in exports Estonian Institute of Future Studies, 2003. A strong United States (US) dollar and low domestic inflation had a positive impact on the competitiveness of Estonian goods. The economic growth was supported by expanding industries, mostly due to sub-contracting work with northern neighbours, and the fast growth in the areas of transport, storage and communications—the result of increased business *in* oil products and export.

The rise in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 6% in 2002 National Development Plan, 2003 shows Estonian industry to have survived the recent economic decline—being positively influenced by the economic success of the European countries. The centre of economic growth in Estonia is shifting from the domestic market and from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), to exports with Western European countries. This shift means the need for a supply-structure modification—a long-term process characterised by the convergence of producer prices, real wages and productivity. The accession

into the EU, especially in the preparation for the common market of the food industry has had a positive effect on export potential.

From 1998 to 1999, Estonian industries faced an all-time high level of free-market competition. The ability to cut expenses was challenged by the high cost of financing. In 1998, Estonian industrial enterprises were challenged to restructure their activities in order to compete with West European markets (Enterprising Estonia, 2002). The success of enterprises oriented towards European markets was the main source of economic growth later in 2000. Therefore it may be concluded that the sale of Estonian industrial goods is dependent on the export market, and that the small size of the domestic market is hindering the development of Estonian industry.

It is important to note that while the number employed in industry and agriculture is decreasing, employment in the services sector is increasing. The following sectors have been earlier identified as having good employment prospects: wood industry, food industry, light industry/textiles, metalworking and mechanical engineering, chemical industry, electronic industry and instrument engineering. Statistics from 2001 to 2002 show a significant growth in employment in the service sectors. The unemployment rate reached 10.4% at this time.

The structure of employment has changed over the last few years, as a result of new enterprises belonging mainly to the secondary and tertiary sectors (Emor, 2003). In 2002, the growth of employment in the tertiary sector reached 61.7% due to the decrease in the primary and secondary sectors. The current employment structure clearly shows a rise in the service sectors which is partly based on changes in the technology industry.

Social Developments Since 1990

Since 1991, the Estonian population has decreased by 13% due to a negative natural increase and emigration (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2003a). Preliminary estimation of the population on 1 January 2003 was 1,356,000. In the year of 2002, approximately 5,500 fewer births than deaths were registered. The number of births was somewhat higher in 2002 than the year before, returning to the level of 2000. At the beginning of 2002, the age distribution of the population was the following: 0–14 years olds, 17%; 15–64 year olds, 67%; 65 and older, 16% (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2002c).

On 1 September 2002 only 13,343 children were enrolled in grade 1, compared to 21,000 in 1997. While changes in enrolment rates will not affect economic activity in the near future, it is important to consider these changes when planning general and vocational education and training (VET). The number of basic school graduates will quickly begin to drop as of the 2004/05 academic year.

Unemployment

An analysis of unemployment rates for different age groups indicates that in the years 1998–2000 (Statistical Department, Labour Force Survey, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002), unemployment increased most among young people (15–24 years old, especially 20–24 years old group). Unemployed youth from the ages of 15–24, increased by 4,300—going from 19.8% in 1999 to 23.9% in 2000. Further, registered unemployment shows that 10.5% of young people do not register themselves as unemployed.

The *Labour Force Survey* shows that the unemployment of young people has especially risen in rural areas, with women being particularly hard hit. One out of four unemployed people in the rural areas is aged 16–24. 30.5% of the young women are unemployed.

Regional Development

Regional development during the period of transition has been very uneven. The greatest overall impact on regional development (as well as on overall economic development) has been the change from a *centrally planned economy* to a *market-driven economy*. This change has led to the closing and restructuring of a large number of inefficient companies in all sectors of the economy. Industries requiring a great deal of energy for production or distribution were particularly affected by the liberalisation of prices for fuel, gas, etc. Due to the concentration of these industries in certain geographical areas during the Soviet period, the process influenced regional structures and developments in Estonia Eamets, 2002. Major trends in regional development in Estonia include: increasing centre-periphery differences in income and employment opportunities; a remarkable increase in unemployment in regions formerly dominated by the agriculture industry and larger companies (often monosectoral); and a transfer of economic activity from the east to the west of the country European Training Foundation, 2001.

Since the mid-1990s, Estonia has tried to create a balance in regional development. In the 1996–99 period, eight regional programs were in operation that channelled financial support to:

1. rural areas,
2. highly problematic settlements that dependent on a single industrial plants and
3. various peripheral areas (islands, border areas, Ida-Viru county, south-east Estonia).

Since 2000 the programs have been reorganised according to the regional development strategy approved in 1999.

2 Estonian Educational System

Current Educational Policy Strategies in Estonia

The Estonian Education System has experienced continual change and reform since the beginning of the 1990s. The need to meet the demands of a changing society and to build up economic prosperity after the long Soviet occupation has been the driving motivation for these changes. The 1992 '*Constitution of the Republic of Estonia*' (§37) provides everybody in Estonia with the right to an education. Compulsory schooling is free of charge at state and municipal schools. Since 1998, the Educational Structure has been changed three times due to new legislation.

Education policy in Estonia is framed by the national Parliament and the Government (deciding on the national strategies for education). The majority of educational policies address higher and general education. In the 1990s, there was a shift towards more attention for Vocation Education and Training (VET), a trend that has continued to grow gradually in the last few years.

Current education policy tends to follow the overall liberal economic and political approach. This approach has been dominant in Estonian society for the last decade, with much attention being paid to such issues as privatisation and community responsibility of schools, rationalisation and cost efficiency in education. Several initiatives in the years 1997–2000 (i.e., '*Learning Estonia*', '*Education Scenarios 2010*', '*Tiger Leap Programme*', '*Education Forum*') focussed on strategic thinking regarding the overall education system, but also in a broader context taking into account a global perspective, and IT-based economy.¹ As a result, in 1999/2000, an important *policy document* (*Education Strategy 'Learning Estonia'*) was prepared by the Estonian Ministry of Education (MoE, since 2003 known as the *Ministry of Education and Research*) and the task force of the '*Education Forum*' (involving social partners and NGOs).

The idea was to create a society where individuals and organisations are informed citizens and the primary language of education is Estonian. The education system has to provide people with learning opportunities throughout their lives, ensure the development of the necessary institutions and support continuous development of the educational organisations as well as the whole society.

The draft of the policy document '*Learning Estonia*' was widely discussed for 2 years (2000–01) in Educational Forums. Eventually the Estonia Government adopted the policy before any discussion in Parliament. There were several discussions in parliamentary commissions before general discussion

¹ Although the contrast between the vision of "Learning Estonia" and the reality of the conditions in VET has been "strong" according to the OECD review team in 1999 OECD, 2001.

began. In the end a consensus among the key players was achieved. During a certain hearing in Parliament (May 2002), however, a sudden change occurred among some people from the coalition who started to strongly criticise the contents of the document. As a result, the *Education Strategy* as a document was withdrawn by the Government.

Since May 2003 the *Ministry of Education and Research* has been preparing a new educational strategy.

If the previous strategy paper stressed the future and did not offer direct solutions on how to achieve the aims, the new document stresses the problems our educational system confronts every day, and sets the benchmarks for next 3–4 years.

Current Areas of Educational Reform

The goal for reform in the Estonian educational system is to create preconditions that allow all students—throughout their lives—to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience that will help them succeed in society, their personal life and their career. During the first half of 2001, the *Development Strategy Knowledge-based Estonia*, the *Action Plan for Developing the Vocation Education*, the *Higher Education Reform Strategy*, and the *National Development Strategy on Youth Work* were approved by the Government.

The *Action Plan for the Development of Vocational Education 2001–2004* outlines comprehensive measures for improving the quality of vocational education—ensuring it is relevance to the labour market and broadening access to all age groups. Under the *Action Plan*, special emphasis is put on the development of *Regional Training Centres* that provide primary training for students, retraining for adults, pre-training for students in general secondary education, and vocational education and training for people with special needs.² The development of training centres is especially important as they fulfil the role of incubators for other vocational education schools and address a number of areas such as curriculum development and teacher training.

Financial support for the implementation of the *Action Plan* comes from the Estonian state budget as well as from the *EU PHARE* Program.³ Other

² People with special needs in an educational context are people with medical disabilities (delayed development, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, neurological defect or development disorder, speech, reading or writing disorders), as well as people who need special treatment due to behavioural problems. Conditions should be established so that children with special needs can be educated in a mediation group together with healthy children. If not, there is the right to organise separate groups at mainstream schools or special schools.

³ The *EU PHARE* programme offers financial support and practical cooperation for the preparation of accession countries to join the EU. It was established in 1989 to support reforms in Poland and Hungary, but has applied to more than 13 countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

initiatives under the *Action Plan* include supporting the integration of practical application and theory, pursuing the development of curriculum modules in vocational education and training, consolidation of the administration of vocational education institutions, optimising resource utilisation and developing stronger links between vocational education institutions and social partners.

Special emphasis is put on the training of supervisors for practical training in private business.

In the sphere of higher education, various ideas are being developed to adopt a system that is easily compatible with degrees in the European system. Under the proposal concerning the so-called *Bologna Process*, the Estonian Government took the position that all higher education institutions would have the discretion to determine the length of study in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Depending on the field, bachelor studies may take 3–4 years and, masters programs 1–2 years. However, the total length of study to earn a masters degree may not exceed 5 years (this does not apply to professions such as physicians and veterinarians).

Other issues in the Governments higher education reform package include changes in the methods of financing and the development of the non-university sector.

Major changes have taken place in developing the non-university sector. Until 2002, instruction in the non-university sector was offered only after a diploma and vocational higher education. This practice has proven to be unreasonable because it is difficult to make a *distinction* between requirements for diploma studies and vocational higher education studies especially as regards to labour market demands. Under the *Higher Education Reform* plan unified regulations were created for all curricula in a non-university sector. In order to maintain the transparency of the higher education system, instructions follow an applied higher education curricula that will be mainly concentrated on the applied higher education institutions. These are the major reform areas of the Estonian Education System. Many of the reforms, especially in Vocational Education, were introduced as a result of drastic changes in the labour market and rapid progress in technology.

Skill Needs Assessment

The greatest problem in the Estonian labour market is the mismatch between the supply and the demand of labour. There is at the same time high unemployment and the lack of a sufficiently qualified labour force, with youth and long-term unemployment rates remaining high. The challenges in matching the supply and demand of the labour market, in addressing the existing skills gap and improving the quality of the existing labour force, as well as counteracting the risk of a growing social divide, remain high.

In order to improve VET and CVT (Continuing Vocational Training) planning at the national and local levels, sector studies and training needs analysis is being used.

Sector studies have already been carried out in the wood processing and furniture industry (1999), the engineering industry (2001), information and communication technology industries (2002) and the food-processing sector (2003).

The role of engineers and other specialists with technical education is very important when undertaking development and innovation, therefore the implementation of an obligatory training system for specialists is a priority. Estonian RD&I key fields are identified, taking into account the specific preconditions and opportunities, available research potential, existing economic structure and international trends in RD&I: user-friendly information technologies and development of an IT society; biomedicine and material technologies (Knowledge-based Estonia, 2002).

3 Recent Developments in Education and Training (IVET and CVT) in a Lifelong Learning Perspective

Policy Development

The main principles for future VET reorganisation and development, such as flexibility, efficiency, quality, co-operation and integration were established in the 'VET concept', adopted in 1998. More concrete targets were set in the 'Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System 2001–2004', which has defined a total of 23 tasks linked to specific targets to be achieved in 2001–04:

- to increase the number of VET students by 8% per year, until reaching in 2004. 50% of basic school graduates and 50% of graduates from general secondary schools;
- to lower the drop-out rate from 13% (in 2000) to 8% in 2004;
- to privatise 30% of VET schools by 2004;
- to rationalise the student/teacher ratio from 12:1 (2000) to 16:1 in 2004;
- to raise the share of teachers with higher education from 75% (2000) to 100% in 2004;
- to double the volume of foreign language teaching in all programs;
- to increase the share of VET programs that meet the requirements of vocational standards from 30% (2000) to 100% in 2004;
- to optimise the use of public funding by reducing the learning space per student from 14 m² (2000) to 11 m² in 2004.

However, implementation of the Action Plan has been less than optimal. A coherent strategic and policy framework on CVT is still not in place. The Ministry of Education and Research is elaborating the ‘Lifelong Learning’ strategy.

In 2002, a draft version was sent for comments and discussion to more than 40 organisations (ministries, employer and employee organisations, training institutions, etc.). The strategy is still under consultation and has yet to be adopted by the Estonian government.

Other national policy documents, like the ‘*Estonian National Development Plan 2003–2006*’ and the ‘*National Employment Action Plans 2001, 2002 and 2003*’ stress the need for a national continual training and lifelong learning system in order to improve the employability and quality of the labour force.

The National Adult Education priorities formed on the basis of expert assessments match the priorities set in the Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2002–2004 (Andras, 2002). The priority should be the creation of an adult education system coupled with the development of a national policy for this. Therefore, it is necessary to (National Adult Education Priorities, 2003):

- create a state-financed institution that coordinates adult education systems, implements adult education policy in close co-operation with other adult education institutions and social partners;
- develop an adult education financing model (including state and private resources, e.g., implement individual learning accounts similar to those in the Netherlands and the UK), and the state-financing should be increased significantly;
- improve tax regulation (amendments to the Adult Education Act and Income Tax Act to motivate *private* businesses to support formal education);
- develop and implement a counselling system (including career counselling that would offer services not only for young people but also for adults);
- develop information on the learning *opportunities*;
- prepare adult education and adult training experts;
- develop regulations for licensing and accrediting adult trainers;
- increase access to formal education for adults, expand possibilities to acquire education in correspondence courses;
- develop provisions for recognising previous employment and learning experiences.

Adaptation of a Legal Framework

In 1998, a new legal framework on vocational education institutions, applied higher education institutions, and private schools was created, that introduced

vocational secondary and vocational higher education, established vocational councils, and provided for more flexibility in VET provisioning, rationalisation and privatisation of schools Annus et al., 2002:

- The Vocational Education (VET) Institution Act (June 1998) regulates foundation and operation of the VET schools. This includes the provisioning of VET on the secondary level and also private VET schools as far as the Law on Private Schools does not stipulate otherwise.
- The Private Education Institution Act (June 1998) regulates training over 120 hours that is organised by private providers.
- The Applied Higher Education Institutions Act (June 1998) regulates the foundation and operation of applied higher education institutions; outfitting of applied higher education institutions, and VET schools.
- The Adult Education Act (June 1998) regulates education and training for adults.
- The Professions Act (December 2000) regulates the status and work of the Vocational Councils and the system of qualifications.

In 2002, major amendments were made to the higher education legislation. Since September 2002 (i.e., the 2002/03 academic year), there has been no more enrolment in vocational higher education and diploma study programs.

A person with a secondary education is eligible to continue studies on the higher education level, i.e., to choose between the applied higher education study (in vocational education institutions, applied higher education institutions and institutions which are part of a university structure) or a bachelor's program (in the universities). The duration of applied higher education study is from 3 to 4 years (or 120–160 credit points). Graduates may continue studies in a master's program according to the conditions established by that particular education institution.

Academic higher education study is divided into three levels: bachelor's program, 3–4 years (120–160 credit points); master's program, 1–2 years (40–80 credit points); and a doctor's program, 3–4 years (120–160 credit points). The duration of a bachelor's and master's study together must be a minimum of 5 years.

Basic studies in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, architecture and construction engineering, are based on an integrated curriculum of bachelor's and master's courses with a duration of 5–6 years (200–240 credit points).

Current legal provisions fostering CVT and facilitating access to training are not sufficient enough and will be addressed by an amendment of the Adult Education Act, aiming to enhance motivation of employers, employees, and

training providers in CVT (by improving incentives) and to provide for quality assurance mechanisms (including licensing of training institutions).

Governance and Responsible Bodies

The Ministry of Education was reorganised in 2001 and moved from the capital Tallinn to Tartu, which resulted in a high staff turnover. The VET and CVT department was abolished and put under a new Policy department *in* the Secondary Education Division. The task of implementing the education policy has been outsourced to the newly created public bodies, the School Network Administration Office and the Public Assets Management Office.

In 2002, preparations were made and legislative acts adopted for reorganising and renaming the Ministry of Education. Since 1 January 2003 it is known as the Ministry of Education and Research. In addition, the Policy department was abolished and four previous departments were re-established: general education, vocational and adult education, research and higher education and youth.

The involvement of social partners in education and training has been increasing since the latest reforms in 1998, and social partners play a strong role via Vocational Councils in the development of the National Employee Qualification System.

In Estonia, secondary education is free of charge, the state and local governments are obligated to provide all students the opportunity for acquiring secondary education either in a gymnasium or a VET school. Initial VET is mostly financed by the state budget. The budget of VET schools is tight, the teacher's payroll accounts for approximately 50% of the VET schools' learning expenditure, all of which leaves little funding for developmental activities (Sepp, 2003).

Public sector expenditure on VET has remained on the same level since 2000, forming, on average, 0.56% of GDP. The public sector expenditure on VET in 1999 was 475.5 million Estonian kroons, which increased 1.34 times by 2003 to 635.4 million Estonian kroons.

In the Ministry of Education and Research budget, the VET expenditure takes up 24–25%. The share of the budget decreased in 2002 in relation to the implementation of the higher education reform—the expenditures on higher education increased ca. 20%, increasing the higher education share in the budget from 35% (2001) to 38% (2002) (Sepp, 2003).

Since autumn 2002, after adoption of the new legislation, the new students in VET schools, who are on the applied higher education level, are financed as students in the applied higher education institutions (Per-student costs in 2002 was 12,600 Estonian kroons, and in 2003, 14,000 Estonian kroons) (Sepp, 2003).

In general, CVT is financed by the state exclusively for civil servants (2–4% of the annually salary fund) and teachers (minimum of 3% of annual salary fund) at state education institutions.

Programs for adult education are financed by the state budget if they match the approved national priority areas, such as long-term courses (more than 56 hours) for specific target groups, or Estonian language courses for non-Estonians.

The Estonian tax system (a 26% flat tax) allows for a resident natural person to deduct the expenses of training incurred during a period of taxation. This applies also to permanent resident of Estonia under 26 years of age (Teataja, 2003).

Since the beginning of 2002, the deduction of training expenses is limited to 50%, but may not exceed 100,000 Estonian kroons of taxable income.

The Income Tax Act (1999) provides tax-free, in-service training and re-training of employees, which is to be paid for by the employer upon termination of an employee due to redundancy. This is to motivate participation in training, which should help these persons to become employed, and stay employed.

VET is also financed via international projects.

PHARE Projects

- PHARE 2000 '*Project enhancing human resource development in the Ida-Viru (North-East) region*'—total cost 20.7 million Estonian kroons, incl. Estonian co-financing of 5.0 million Estonian kroons.
- PHARE 2000 '*Project enhancing human resource development in the southern-Estonia region*'—total cost 41.5 million Estonian kroons, incl. Estonian co-financing of 10.1 million Estonian kroons.
- PHARE 2001 '*Project enhancing human resource development in the islands region*'—total cost 16.6 million Estonian kroons, incl. Estonian co-financing of 3.9 million Estonian kroons.

In order to increase efficiency of the VET schools and to achieve better results, it is necessary to change funding methods and implement student-based financing. This means that all budgetary resources are allocated according to the number of students, and the school is responsible for using the resources effectively. In this case, the cost of a student-learning place covers all direct and indirect costs (Sepp, 2003).

Probably the share allocated for VET in the state budget will not increase in the coming years, therefore it is important to involve the financial resources of the private sector and make use of EU structural funds (after joining the EU) (Sepp, 2003).

During the first programming period from 2004 to 2006, the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring two separate measures.

Measure 1—Educational system supporting the flexibility and employability of the labour force and providing opportunities of lifelong learning for all—under the priority of Human Resource Development this will be co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF);

Measure 28—Modernisation of infrastructure for vocational and higher education—under the priority of Infrastructure and Local Development, this will be funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The Foundation for Vocational Education and Training Reform in Estonia (FVETRE) will be the implementing agency on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Research 2003 is the year for preparation, in order to be ready for administering the projects in 2004. The tasks for both institutions are to inform partners and beneficiaries to ensure maximum use of the opportunities provided.

4 Modernisation of the Education and Training System

Structure and Organisation

The negative image of VET is partly inherited from the Soviet period, partly due to the trend in society towards higher education, and partly because of assumed lower quality associated with VET.

The Vocational Educational Institutions Act stipulates that a VET school provide training following a school curriculum, which has been prepared on the basis of the National Curriculum for Vocations, Professions and Occupations.⁴ A national curriculum is available for general education, but by the end of 2002, there were not yet any national curricula for VET.

Neither the VET schools nor the VET programmes are accredited in Estonia. Talks on rectifying this situation are ongoing. In order to organise training,

⁴ The National Curriculum for Vocations, Professions, and Occupations must determine the functions of vocational, professional and occupational training, the general requirements for the commencement of studies and graduation, the list of compulsory subjects, and the total extent of studies. It is prepared on the basis of the qualification requirements established for vocations, professions and occupations with Vocational Standards and the general requirements for the national VET curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for preparation of the national VET curricula by field of study in co-operation with the Vocational Councils.

all private and municipal VET schools must have a training license for each program they are offering on the *secondary VET* or *applied higher education level*. In April 2003, there were 25 private VET schools in Estonia with 58 valid training licenses. Tartu Vocational Education Centre, the only municipal VET school in Estonia, had 43 valid training licenses.

Estonian VET schools provide their training on two levels: first, the secondary education level (secondary VET program after basic education or secondary VET program after general secondary education) and second, on the higher education level (applied higher education program).

The standard duration of a secondary VET program after basic education is a minimum of 3 years, aimed at preparing skilled workers. This program is broader, with 50% of general education subjects and specialisation taking place at a later stage. The standard duration of a secondary VET program after general secondary education is 1–2.5 years, and is aimed at preparing workers for a higher level of skilled work. The program is oriented towards preparation for the labour market, with 85% of VET-related subjects.

The standard length of an applied higher education program is 3–4 years, aimed at preparing specialists and middle-level managers. It is a first level study of higher education, during which a student acquires the necessary qualifications for either working in a certain vocational field, or for continuing their education in a master's study (Riigi Teataja, 2003).

VET schools also provide opportunities to acquire basic VET for basic school or general secondary school students, in the scope of the elective subjects foreseen in the *National Curriculum for Basic and General Secondary Education* and according to the basic VET curricula. At VET schools—where secondary vocational education is acquired according to curricula in the field of music or choreography—training groups for students in grades 4–9 may be formed in order to organise the corresponding basic VET. Until recently, basic school dropouts had no place in the education system. VET schools provide basic VET for those students who are beyond the minimum school-leaving age (17–25 years of age). They acquire basic education in the form of evening courses or correspondence learning.

In order to organise basic VET, the VET school signs a contract with the basic school or general secondary school. The knowledge and skills acquired during the completion of the basic VET program are taken into account when the student continues studies in a VET school.

CVT courses in VET schools are flexible and curricula based, involving a school council but more likely a vocational council. In some professions individual training is offered in small groups of three to four students per trainer, with a focus on practical training.

Educational and Occupational Standards, Certification

A VET school is considered finished after a particular program is successfully completed. The conditions for completion are established in each program, and can be different for different programs. The graduation certificate certifies that the person has covered a certain curriculum, at a certain level, and in a certain VET school.

The graduation certificates and diplomas received from the VET schools are as follows:

- A student who graduates from a VET school, from a curriculum *after basic education*, gets a certificate entitled '*Graduation Certificate on Vocational Secondary Vocational Education*'. The general education national examinations (compulsory at the end of gymnasium) are, here, not compulsory. But, the students who want to continue studying at the higher education level should take these examinations, as they are generally required for matriculation.
- As an exception, those students who are not studying in the Estonian language, must take the national examination in the Estonian language upon graduation. Those who score a 60% or more, receive the certificate on middle level proficiency in Estonian.
- A student, who graduates from a VET school, *after general secondary education*, gets a certificate '*Graduation certificate for Vocational Secondary Education*'.
- A student, who graduates from a VET school, a vocational higher education program, gets a diploma for a vocational higher education programme and has the right to continue studies in a master's study following the rules set by the education institution.
- A student, who graduates from an *applied higher education* programme in a VET school receives a diploma, and has the right to continue their studies in a master's programme following the rules set by the education institution.
- A student, who covers a basic VET programme at a VET school, gets a certificate and special entries are made on the graduation certificates from basic schools or upper secondary schools.

An academic transcript automatically accompanies the graduation certificate or diploma (Estonian National Observatory, 2003).

In Estonia, the National Qualification Authority (established in September 2001) is developing the National Employee Qualification System, a quality system, which guarantees the employees improved competitiveness in the labour

market. This Authority is heading up the development of vocational standards, and the organising of vocational qualification examinations for recognising vocational qualifications.

Vocational standards ascertain the knowledge, skills, experience, values and personal qualities related to a particular vocational qualification, i.e., the required competence level for a vocation. A Vocational Qualification Certificate certifies vocational qualification. The qualification system is a service to both the graduates and future employers.

Currently there are 14 Vocational Councils, two of which were added in 2002. In the 1998–2002 period, representatives of more than 1,300 institutions (businesses, trainers, occupational and professional unions) participated in the drawing up of the vocational standards. As of February 2003, 302 separate vocational qualifications had been approved (National Qualification Authority, 2003).

Those who pass a *Qualification Examination* receive a *Vocational Qualification Certificate*. The examinations are organised to allow the granting of the vocational qualifications.

It does not matter if the knowledge and skills are acquired at school, independently, under somebody's guidance, or working in a business. Both students and workers, who want official certification of their vocational qualification, are eligible to take the examination. The examinations are voluntary, except in some vocational fields where the law has prescribed otherwise. Examination methods can be different depending on the vocational field: written or oral exams, trial work, etc. (National Qualification Authority, 2003).

A private, public-legal entity or institution can apply for the right to grant vocational qualifications, where the main field of activity is the development of a vocation or the respective vocational, professional or occupational training. The vocational council certifies the right for the interested institute to grant vocational qualifications.

In order to grant vocational qualifications, a Vocational Commission is to be established, which includes representatives of employer and employee organisations, as well as vocational and professional organisations. The Commission must have a license, issued by an authorised vocational council. Generally, it is an employers association or a professional union, but it can also be a school or a training company. In April 2003, 14 professional unions had obtained a license to grant vocational qualifications. However it is more likely, that VET schools will become approved examination centres. In April 2003, four VET schools were certified to serve as examination centres (National Qualification Authority, 2003).

Vocational qualification certificates are registered by the issuing organisation and are then inserted in the vocational register according to the rules set

by the statute of the vocational register. The first certificates have already been awarded in a number of professions (i.e., real estate, forestry, construction, food processing).

VET schools provide training in 45 different fields of study (only five of these are on the applied higher education level). It is also possible to specialise within these fields. In the 2002/03 academic year, VET 'After Basic Education' received 1.2 applications per vacancy, VET 'After General Secondary Education' received 1.5 applications per vacancy, and 'Applied Higher Education in VET Schools' received 2.3 applications per vacancy (Estonian National Observatory, 2003).

Almost all VET institutions offer work-related training courses for adults, mainly in the areas that they teach, and based on prepared curricula. Most public universities and applied higher education institutions offer further training as well, either in formal (e.g., flexible 'open universities') or non-formal (in-service training) education system. Adult education is also provided by two main national NGO umbrella organisations: the Adult Education League (running some Adult Education Centres), and ANDRAS, the Association of Estonian Adult Educators, both of which receive state funding for these projects.

An apprenticeship system does not exist in Estonia. A *PHARE* 2001 programme is attempting to float a pilot programme in a few selected occupations, and under *PHARE* 2002, work-related training programmes will be developed for particular risk groups (i.e., drop-outs, general secondary school leavers).

Teachers

In the 2002/03 academic year, the teacher/student ratio was, on average, 1:12.7 (Sepp, 2003). The goal is to reach a 1:16 ratio (Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System in 2001–2004, 2001). In order to achieve this, it will be necessary to increase the student's independent work.

The salary level of the VET schools' pedagogical staff has recently been on the Estonian national average. In 2002, the salaries were even 11% above average (Sepp, 2003).

In the last few years, the number of teachers with a higher education degree has increased, which indicates that teacher's qualification in VET schools is improving. In 1999, the qualification requirements that came into effect on 1 September 2003, require the vocational teacher, to have:

- a pedagogical higher education, and at least 2 years of work experience in the vocational, special or occupational field; or
- higher education in the field concerned, and at least 2 years of work experience in the vocational, special, or occupational field. In addition they

must have passed 1,600 hours of complementary training on vocational pedagogy or will have accomplished within the first year of employment as a vocational teacher Riigi Teataja, 2003.

As the goal proved to be unrealistic, in August 2002, the qualification requirements were changed again and the new goal was set for 1 September 2007:

- vocational pedagogical or any other pedagogical higher education and at least 3 years of work experience in the vocational, special or occupational field or
- higher or post-secondary technical education in the field, at least 3 years of work experience in the vocational, special or occupational field and passed 320 hours complementary training on vocational pedagogy Riigi Teataja, 2003.

Modernisation of Training Infrastructure and Equipment

Of the 81 Estonian VET schools existing in the academic year 2003/04, 34.5% provided programs for both *post-basic* and *post-general secondary* education, 7.5% only for *post-basic* education and 58% only for *post-general secondary* education (15 schools had enrolled students in the applied higher education programs).

In general, VET schools are relatively small. More than half of the schools have less than 300 students.

This system consisting of many small schools is very inefficient. Therefore, the public VET school system has been reorganised by merging the smaller VET schools, and developing regional training centres. In 1993/94, there were 77 public and 3 municipal VET schools, which is 1 less than in 2002/03. By 2002/03, the number of public VET schools had decreased by 20–57, with 1 municipal and 23 private VET schools.

In 1997–98 period, public VET schools were merged in the region of Saaremaa County and the capital city of Tallinn. In 1999 the VET schools in Tallinn, Valga, Võru and Viljandi county were merged together. In 2000 mergers were done in Narva (four schools), Pärnu (2) and Tallinn (2). In 2001 this occurred in Lääne-Virumaa (two schools), and three schools were communalised and then merged with Tartu (School Network Administration Office, 2003).

In 2003, three schools in Pärnu county merged together, four schools became two in Tallinn, and two schools in Ida-Virumaa. In addition, the negotiations are continuing in regard to communalisation of VET schools in Harju, Lääne-Viru, Tartu and Jõgeva counties.

Great expectations have been set in the concept of Regional Training Centres (VET Centres).

Gradual implementation has begun on the basis of existing VET schools—with *PHARE* support in 2000—but has not yet reached a vital breakthrough moment.

These Centres are expected to have a crucial role in the economic and social development of a region, providing multifunctional services: initial VET, applied higher education, CVT, counselling, continual training of teachers, labour market analysis, program development and local networking.

The situation of VET school infrastructure is very different. Most of the teaching and production facilities were built between 1970 and 1990. Since 1990, no new school buildings have been constructed, but almost 5% of existing buildings have been either rebuilt or renovated. From 1996 to 2000, 64.8 million Estonian kroons were invested in renovating (Sepp, 2003).

Participation in Education and Training

During the last 3 years, the rate of participation in education has increased among all age groups, except among persons aged 23–24 years. Of those studying in 2001, 13% were attending basic education, 26% in secondary education, 22% in VET and 40% in higher education. 18% of the students were employed, 3% unemployed and 79% inactive because of studying (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2002b).

In the academic year 2002/03, 15,773 students were enrolled in VET schools, which are 655 students more than the previous year—VET Programmes After Basic Education 6,533 students, VET After General Secondary Education 6,669 students and applied higher education 2,571 students. 12,016 students were enrolled for daytime classes; 1,103 for correspondence courses and 83 for evening classes. In applied higher education, 2,222 were enrolled as full-time, and 349 for correspondence study. Most students were enrolled in the engineering trades in the VET after basic education level; for business and administration fields, in VET after secondary general education, and applied higher education level (Estonian National Observatory, 2003).

In 2001/02, 10,911 students graduated from VET schools at the secondary level—2,445 from vocational education, 3,396 VET after basic education, 4,629 VET after secondary general education and 441 post-secondary technical education programme. 1,202 students graduated from VET schools in the vocational higher education programme (Estonian National Observatory, 2003).

Guidance and Counselling

The lack of a comprehensive system of vocational counselling and guidance are partly addressed by VET Centres. In addition, it is intended that professionally trained counsellors will also soon be employed in VET schools.

In 2003, the following activities are taking place to make vocational counselling services more effective (Employment Action Plan 2003, 2002):

- creating additional vocational counsellor positions at the employment offices;
- improving access to information on the labour market situation (e.g., labour needs by field and occupation);
- description of vocations, computer-based information system for occupations;
- translation and editing of counselling materials into Estonian;
- preparation and publishing of booklets that assist young people to choose a career.

Current Activities

Since the end of 2003, preparation of the next *Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System for 2005–2008* has been in operation. As in the previous *Action Plan*, social partners are thoroughly involved in the process. Basically the new plan will continue the processes already started in the previous period. This time, more stress will be on the monitoring of the planned activities.

Concerning the *Lisbon* targets and conclusions, Estonia is far ahead in comparison to other candidate countries, but still has to catch up to most EU averages. However, the main issues are already being addressed by the government (i.e., ICT development, increase in the employment rate, access to education, strengthening research and development, foreign languages, Lifelong learning, etc.).

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4. Vocational Education and Training in Latvia: The Problems and Solutions

1 Introduction

In a transition society, when social changes are happening very fast, the role of social institutions increases radically, as they help to meet the demands of the members of a society, regulate their activities, ensure the stability of public life (because when getting involved in the activities of an institution, a network of certain statuses is being established), as well as the integration of the individual's wishes, activities and relationships is provided, thus stimulating the internal cohesion of social communities.

Education, as a special social institution, plays an important role in these processes. The significance of education radically increases, because it is, first of all, aimed at the younger generation, preparing them for life in fundamentally new circumstances: it also helps working people (through varied adult training programmes) to understand better the processes of the changing society and to get them involved.

The educational system is one of the most significant elements in developing a society's social structure, as well as in the reshaping of its intellectual life. The system of education, as a social institution, also performs the functions of social control over the intellectual, ethical and physical development of the coming generation.

Educational establishments issue documents of a certain type, which certifies acquired knowledge, the rights to proceed to a higher or to a different level of education, and to attain employment corresponding to the acquired education.

The social effectiveness of education depends not only on the acquired schooling, including its range and quality, but also on the skills needed to apply this knowledge to everyday life, as well as in lifelong learning process.

Vocational education and training (VET), as a social institution, has some specific qualities:

- The graduates of VET establishments gain a certain social status (corresponding to their profession).
- VET establishments encourage inclusion into the society—and elimination of social isolation—of those young people, who have difficulties in general education schools.
- A well-planned VET (from the point-of-view of professional and regional needs) reduces potential unemployment.
- VET has a higher level of institutionalisation, which is expressed:
 - in the types of normative requirements set for learning;
 - in the established forms of control;
 - in the certain forms of economic provision.
- A specific character is also revealed through the particular implementation of teaching and learning methods and techniques, in the organisation of the whole teaching/learning process, and in the interaction between theory and practice.

Within the context of a transition society, the role of VET becomes especially important, because it is the link between the present and the future. VET establishments are institutions where people are being trained, whose professional qualifications and social maturity are meeting the increasing challenges of the labour market, new technologies and new forms of work organisation and dynamic social-economic conditions.

All of the aforementioned indicates the objective need to reform the system of VET, converting it to a modern system that meets today's needs. This study basically addresses the issues of pre-service VET.

2 Employment and Unemployment

The unemployment demographics, which to a certain extent reflect the demands of the labour market, leave a considerable impact on the development of VET. A general overview of these issues can be gained from the material given in the Tables 1 and 2.

In Latvia, the situation in the area of employment has not changed recently, and the official level of unemployment has fluctuated but remaining slightly above 8%. VET leaves a considerable impact on the level of unemployment.

One can draw the following conclusions from the materials summarised in Table 2:

- the lowest number of unemployed are among the people with the highest education;

Table 1 Annual average number and employment of economically active residents

Year	Economically active residents; thousand people	Including		Registered with the National Employment Office			
		Unemployed job-seekers		Not working		Unemployed	
		Abs.	% of total no. of ec.active residents	Abs.	% of total no. of ec.active residents	Abs.	% of total no. of ec.active residents
1996	1,196	949	247	95	7.9	90	7.5
1997	1,167	990	177	86	7.3	84	7.1
1998	1,149	986	162	112	9.7	111	9.7
1999	1,130	968	161	111	9.8	109	9.6
2000	1,100	941	159	94	8.5	93	8.4

Source: Central Board of Statistics Latvia.

Table 2 Division of unemployed by the level of their education (% of total number)

	1995	1996	1997	2001
Total number of unemployed	100	100	100	100
With higher education	5.9	6.0	6.1	7.1
With secondary vocational	34.4	35.9	38.0	41.8
With general secondary	34.1	33.4	30.2	27.8
With elementary and lower than elementary	26.6	24.7	25.7	23.3

Source: Central Board of Statistics Latvia.

- the highest number of unemployed are among people with vocational education and training;
- the number unemployed with no profession at all, or with low level of education, is lower than that for the vocational educated.

In order to better understand the reason for these phenomena, the education structure and demographics have been analysed.

The following data show the division of the unemployed in relation to their level of education in 2001 (% of GDP) (Figure 1).

These data (except those that show the share of employed with higher education) are very similar to the data characterising unemployment (see Table 2). The breakdown of the unemployed by sex and age, for the year 2001, are characterised by the following data (the data from previous years reflect the same tendencies) (Figure 2):

Total number of unemployed (%)	100
Male (%)	42.6 (5% of these in age group 55–59)
Female (%)	57.4

Taking into account that, in recent years, approximately 95–96% of the graduates of VET establishments (data obtained by random sampling) are employed either in the occupation they have been trained in or closely related fields. The high number of unemployed among secondary vocational education graduates can be explained by the fact that, typically their education had been acquired quite a long time ago, and no longer meets the needs of the modern market. The increasing demand of the labour market for an unskilled work force and with a low level of education indicates a significant change in employment practices. It is more advantageous companies to employ unskilled labour and therefore lower job compensation. However, it can be predicted, that in the future the demand for a qualified labour force, able to undergo retraining, will increase.

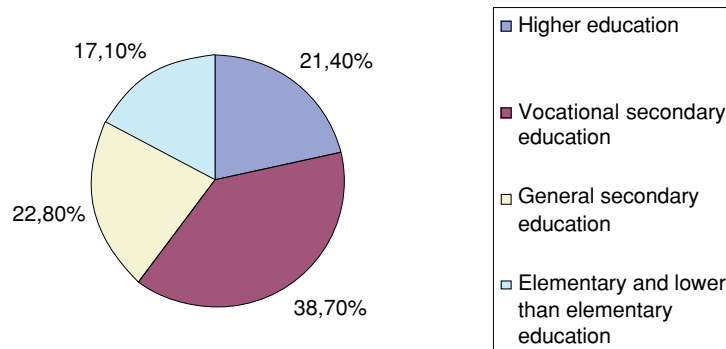


Figure 1 Division of unemployment in relation to level of education. Source: Central Board of Statistic Latvia

3 VET in Latvia

It is possible to evaluate the VET reform, if the socio-economic and demographic processes of the society are analysed in close context with the objective processes in education system.

When analysing the data given in Table 3, it can be concluded that the role of general education schools in the society has changed. It is related to demographic tendencies. Certainly, the curriculum, programmes, their content and learning methods have changed radically, and now they are oriented towards the norms existing in a democratic society.

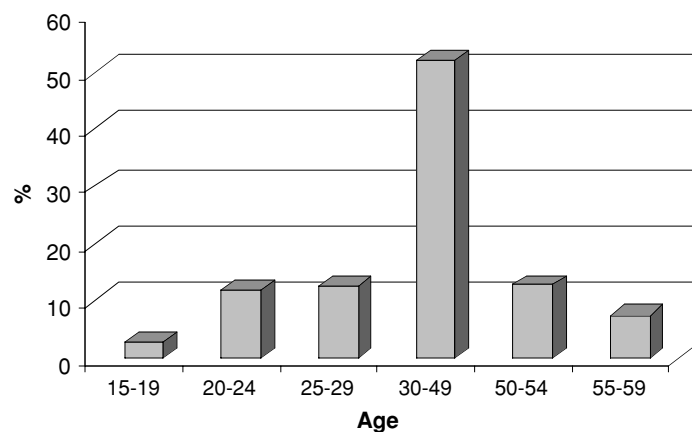


Figure 2 Number of unemployed in different age groups. Source: Central Board of Statistics Latvia

Table 3 Number of students/students of educational establishments

Year	All types of general education schools		Vocational education and training establishments		Higher education establishments and colleges	
	No. of establishments	No. of students in thousands	No. of establishments	No. of students in thousands	No. of establishments	No. of students in thousands
1990	962	352	143	67	10	46
1993	1,048	336	130	49	26	39
1997	1,110	360	123	46	33	65
2000	1,074	360	120	49	33	101
2001	1,066	352	126	47	36	110
2002	1,052	340	124	47	37	119
2002 % vs. 1990	109.4	96.6	86.7	70.1	370	258.7

Source: Central Board of Statistics Latvia.

Different trends are taking place in the fields of VET and higher education. In Latvia, in the last 13 years, the number of higher education establishments has increased fourfold, and the number of students increased by a factor 2.6. In the same period, the number of VET establishments has *declined by* 10%, while the number of students has dropped by one third. The prestige of VET establishments has also been dropping.

Data indicates that more than one fifth of VET graduates did not enter the labour market. Research needs to be undertaken to provide a thorough explanation for this phenomenon. There are no well-grounded theories of what consequences the society might face in the future, resulting from the rapid increase in higher education graduates, but a decrease in the numbers of VET graduates.

In 1997, 40% of elementary school (up to grade 9) graduates continued their education in VET establishments. By 2002 this had dropped to 31.4%.

It is indicative that, according to the data of the Central Board of statistics, 2,112 out of 13,409 graduates (or 16%) of VET institutions continued their studies in higher education establishments. A further 875 (6.5%) continued on in other vocational education and training establishments. This shows that more than one fifth of VET graduates did not immediately enter the labour market. To determine exactly why this is, further studies must be carried out.

Undoubtedly, the deep socio-economic and political changes in Latvia in the last 12 year have had a major impact. Essential changes in VET are taking place due to the reduction of the number of VET establishments in Latvia. Table 4 offers insight into this.

This comparison has been done for the period of the VET reform. In general, the result is positive, the number of educational establishments has stabilised. Every year, however, many students are dismissed from education establishments. In the academic year 1995/96, for example, the number reached 5,522, and in 2001/02, 6,862. The reasons are given below.

According to the data of Central Board of Statistics, survey results are the following (*grouped according to significance*):

Reason no.	School year	
	1995/96	2001/02
1	Poor progress	Absence from the school
2	Other reasons	Other reasons
3	Family conditions	Poor progress
4	Changing schools	Family conditions
5	Moving to another place	Changing schools
6	Illness	Illness
7		Moving to another place

Table 4 Number of students, enrolled in and graduated from vocational education and training establishments (in thousands)

Academic year	No. of students	Enrolled	Graduated
1990/91	67.4	29.5	27.8
1996/97	43.1	17.9	12
1997/98	45.7	18.6	11.7
1998/99	46.2	18.2	12.4
1999/2000	47.7	18.5	11.7
2000/01	48.6	18.6	12.8
2001/02	47.6	17.5	13.3
2002/03	46.5	18.1	13.4
2002/03 indicators of academic year compared to 1996/97 (%)	107.8	101.1	111.7

Source: Central Board of Statistics, Latvia.

Thus the main reasons are: poor progress, absence from school.

For several years, the RTU Humanitarian Institute has been conducting short interviews with teachers at VET establishments concerning the reasons why their students drop out. Poor progress due to inadequate preparation in elementary school is given as the main reason. Many VET establishments have developed a special education system, including additional classes, in order to assist their students in making up the necessary material.

VET establishments have the problem of being under the jurisdiction of several different governmental ministries and departments, and this leaves a negative impact on the development of VET in Latvia.

	Academic year	
	1996/97	2002/03
Ministry of education and science	59 VET est.	49 VET est.
Ministry of agriculture	38	35
Ministry of welfare	6	8
Ministry of culture	15	15
Ministry of interior	—	3
Ed. establishments of municipalities	—	7
Private education establishments	—	9

When devising future concepts for VET systems, the Ministry of Education and Science has decided to place all education establishments under their jurisdiction by 2004.

According to the data of the *Latvian National Observatory*, 90–95% of the funding allocated to VET is spent for routing pecuniary demands (i.e., teacher' salaries, community service, etc.), while only 5–10% of the funding is invested in the system's development. Beside the budget funding, schools in general receive additional funding in the amount of 10–15% from outside sources (municipalities, international projects, employer participation, etc.).

The insufficient level of funding is reflected in salaries, and this understandably brings about problems (Table 5).

Educators are in the 'happy-middle' of 8 out of the 13 main branches of employment. In 2001, the average monthly salary of 75% of the total number of educators (including those in higher education) was less than Ls 200.

In brief, this is the social-economic background, which currently determines the functioning of vocational education and training system in Latvia.

4 Vision and the Most Significant Outputs of Vocational Education and Training Reform

Vision of the Reform

After national independence was regained in 1991, a rapid reorganisation and modernisation of every aspect of life began in Latvia. Deep changes took place in the economy, with the conversion to a free market economy. Public life experienced rapid democratisation. Changes occurred in education as well. In 1991, the *Law On Education* was adopted.

In the middle of the 1990s, the weaknesses of VET were addressed and the most important aims and objectives were identified.

In a 1997 report (*Vocational Education and Training in Latvia—Riga, 1997*), the *Centre of Academic Information—Latvian National Observatory* identified Weaknesses of current vocational education and training system:

- Underdeveloped legal foundation The *Law on Education* adopted in 1991 regulates only the administration of initial VET and stipulates its structure. There is no legislation integrating the social partners in the process of setting the curriculum of VET.
- The structure has not been fully developed for the provisioning of initial VETs, continuing education, and retraining.
- Poorly developed network of support institutions (methodological centres, consulting agencies, etc.).

Table 5 Average monthly salaries of employees in different branches in LVL (Euro)

	1995		2000		2001	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
Total	90 (138)	73 (112)	150 (230)	109 (167)	159 (244)	115 (176)
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	64 (98)	55 (84)	115 (176)	85 (130)	119 (182)	88 (135)
Fishery	119 (182)	94 (144)	86 (132)	65 (100)	99 (152)	74 (113)
Industry	95 (146)	77 (118)	151 (231)	110 (169)	159 (244)	115 (176)
Construction	87 (133)	71 (109)	133 (204)	97 (149)	137 (210)	100 (153)
Wholesale and retail sale, repairing of household appliances and equipment	67 (103)	57 (87)	108 (166)	80 (123)	118 (181)	87 (133)
Hotels and restaurants	68 (104)	56 (86)	85 (130)	64 (98)	98 (150)	73 (112)
Transport, life guarding/rescue and communications	136 (208)	107 (164)	193 (296)	138 (212)	200 (307)	143 (219)
Financial brokerage	166 (254)	128 (196)	383 (587)	268 (411)	417 (639)	292 (448)
Real estate transactions	83 (127)	69 (106)	171 (262)	123 (189)	185 (284)	133 (204)
State administration and safety, compulsory social insurance	108 (166)	88 (135)	198 (303)	142 (218)	208 (319)	149 (228)
Education	72 (111)	61 (93)	135 (207)	99 (152)	152 (233)	111 (170)
Health and social care	72 (111)	61 (93)	124 (190)	92 (141)	132 (202)	97 (149)
Other community social and individual services	73 (112)	61 (93)	129 (198)	94 (144)	138 (212)	100 (153)

Source: Central Board of Statistics, Latvia.

- Weak classification of curricula (stages of education, qualification levels, fields of education, etc.).
- Incomplete education quality assessment mechanism (accreditation of education establishments, assessment of students' knowledge and skills).
- Insufficient investment in the development of prospective curricula.
- Many VET establishments with too few students working with out-dated material and insufficient equipment.
- An ever aging school staff, inadequate training, lack of in-service training and poor compensation.
- Insufficient funding in general. Funding from the state budget covers only teachers' salaries, student grants, partial compensation for transportation costs, etc. Subsequently no resources are left over for development.

The focal points of VET system reform:

- Administration of VET system.
- Integration of social partners and support institutions.
- Networking of education establishments.
- The development of national standards.
- Learning and Teaching methods.
- Teacher training.
- Education quality assessment system.
- Vocational/professional in-service training system.
- Funding sources.

Aim of the reform:

- Modernisation of the existing VET system, in order to develop a self-sufficient VET system.

The National Observatory identified the main areas needing improvement in the VET system. The most urgent ones are:

- Development of the Law on VET.
- Amendment of the Law on Education.
- Amendments to the Law on Higher Education.
- Upgrading tax legislation.
- Improvement of the licensing and accreditation system of VET establishments.

In order to guarantee the quality of education in the existing and especially in the newly developed curricula, as well as to meet labour market's requirements for specialists in the new professions, the teaching-learning process has to be modernised, including:

- the development of standards for the new curricula;
- the introduction of new teaching methods;
- development and printing of new teaching–learning materials;
- improvement of material and technical provisions;
- attestation of school leaders and teaching staff;
- in-service training of teaching staff;
- development of a system for assessing the outputs of the educational process.

In order to upgrade and ensure the quality of VET, reform has to be introduced into many areas. The existing qualification system for VET has to be examined and its compatibility with European requirements has to be assessed. These activities shall be aimed at:

- application of classification principles of the European Committee;
- clear definition of professional groups;
- comparison of existing programmes/curricula;
- amendment of the Latvian Classification of Professions/Occupations;
- widening the exchange of information between the European Union, the Central/Eastern European countries and Latvia.

Quite a serious problem is caused by the difference in the understanding of the specific aims and strategies of VET, by different governmental organisations, as well as by the public in general. In order to develop a common strategy, it is necessary to achieve:

- the approval of the reform concept by the Cabinet of Ministers;
- the establishment of a single national system of VET (including adult VET);
- the establishment of indicators to analyse the progress of reform.

One issue, where the lack of knowledge can be felt, is in the understanding of the labour market. For the establishment of a labour market system, the following is needed:

- methodological research;
- forecasts for the development of branches;
- forecasts on municipal level;
- forecasts from social partners.

There is no long-term policy for VET at all levels. The most urgent tasks are the following:

- development of investment programs and a credit policy;
- development of curricula/program funding principles;
- coordination of budget expenditure;
- development of World Bank projects;

- improvement of compensation for teaching staff;
- sources of additional income.

As the existing network of education establishments has been developed without analysing market needs, real efficiency in the use of financial and human resources could be achieved with a better geographic distribution of education establishments, identifying optimal size, etc. This objective can be achieved by:

- developing optimisation methods;
- developing proposals for optimisation at the regional level (partial decentralisation);
- establishing training and examination centres;
- strengthening of the pilot schools developed during the *PHARE* project;
- providing effective operation of the existing network;
- resolving the issues of land ownership.

A successful development of the VET system is not possible without the support and understanding of the whole society. Therefore, information that communicates the goals and achievements of VET is needed, including:

- cooperation with social partners;
- raising public awareness on the results of reform;
- professional career guidance and consultancy.

For the implementation of VET reform on different levels and at different stages, the result, in our opinion, will depend on first of all, how well the reform implementers have understood the objectives and whether they are morally, professionally, as well as materially interested in the results of this reform. Secondly, the result will depend on whether the three most significant processes—development of the information society, internationalisation and advances in science and technology—are taken into account during the reform.

These have been the intentions in implementing VET reform. Many targets have indeed been achieved. We would like to mention the ones that, in our opinion, are the most essential:

- legislation has been aligned;
- VET has been divided into *pre-service* and *in-service* professional training;
- vocational training programmes/curricula have been organised according to differentiated levels: basic/initial VET; vocational training; secondary VET; first stage of higher professional education (college education);
- occupational standards for many professions have been developed;

- common requirements for awarding qualification have been set for many professions. Training examination centres are in operation, employers are included on qualification-awarding boards;
- the responsibilities of different government agencies for VET in Latvia have been identified (i.e., Cabinet of Ministers, MoES, etc.);
- cooperation with social partners is making significant progress. In 1999, the *National Tripartite Council for the Cooperation Among Employers, Government and Trade Unions* established a sub-council named the—*Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for VET*;
- a licensing and accreditation system for VET establishments and curricula has been devised and is being implemented;
- the vocational guidance system for young people is being improved;
- the structure of VET establishments is being improved by optimising their size;
- much has been achieved in the training of teaching staff of VET establishments in the areas of teaching, branch knowledge and skills;
- international cooperation of VET establishments is expanding.

Curricula

The curricula offered by VET establishments have changed in line with current labour market demands. If during the Soviet era, there were only the programmes of secondary education level, then since 1997 VET establishments have also added pedagogic correction programmes of VET (envisaged for young people who return to the education system after a lapse, and for whom it is important to acquire either professional skills or a basic/initial education). Further, the first-stage higher professional education programmes have been offered since 1999.

Basic/Initial Education Level

Vocational Basic/Initial Education and Training

The programmes of vocational basic/initial education and training allow students to enrol without any restrictions as to their former education, but not before the calendar year when they turn 15 years old. The length of the programmes of vocational basic/initial education and training is 1–2 years. *The certificate of vocational basic/initial education and training* shows that the student has acquired vocational basic/initial education and training. The awarded qualification corresponds to the Level 1 professional qualification (theoretical and practical training that entitles the recipient to carry out simple tasks of practical activities).

Secondary Education Level

Vocational Training

The vocational basic training programmes allow students to enrol without regard to any previous education, however not before the calendar year when they reach 15 years of age. The Law on VET stipulates that a student, who has started to acquire a vocational training program without having finished an elementary education, shall be provided pedagogic corrective measures. After passing the final examination, a document certifying the student's acquiring a general elementary education shall be issued. However, generally speaking, vocational training programmes generally enrol students who have already acquired an elementary education.

The National Standard of Vocational Training stipulates that the length of a vocational training program which a student enters after the acquisition of elementary education is to be 2–3 years. The length of vocational training programmes, which a student enters after the acquisition of general secondary education, is to be 1–2 years. Acquisition of a vocational training programme is to be certified by a Certificate of Vocational Training. It certifies that the student's qualification corresponds to the Level 2 professional qualification (indicating theoretical and practical training that entitles one to carry out, independently, work of a qualified worker). Vocational training does not entitle the student to continue in higher education. However for those students who wish to continue their education, 2-year study programmes are available for achieving secondary vocational education and training, which does entitle them to continue their studies on the level of higher education.

General Secondary Education

Ideally, we would like to offer the graduates of vocational training programs the opportunity to obtain a general secondary education, so that they could move on to higher education acquisition if so desired. Towards this end, there are transitional general education groups organised in VET establishments. In the length of 1 year, those who already have vocational training can study the general education subjects they have not previously received, whereupon they can take national examinations, and receive the certificate of general secondary education.

Secondary Vocational Education and Training

Secondary VET programs accept students after the general elementary education or basic/initial VET. Further, the duration of the program after general

elementary education is 3–4 years. With a secondary education, it is 2 years. After finishing this program, one can receive the *Diploma of Secondary Vocational Education and Training* and Level 3 Professional Qualification (advanced theoretical training and professional proficiency). This diploma allows one to study in higher education.

Higher Education Level (Non-University Education)

First Stage of Higher Professional Education (College Education)

These study programmes are provided by colleges and universities. College education provides the acquisition of Level 4 Professional Qualification. The length of study, after general secondary education or secondary VET is 2–3 years. The diploma for the first stage of higher professional education (first issued on 09.06.2000) corresponds to the Level 4 professional qualification (theoretical and practical training).

5 Qualification-Awarding Procedure

In order to receive a professional qualification, a qualification examination has to be passed. The test consists of two parts: an assessment of *theoretical knowledge* and an assessment of *practical skills*. The MoES Vocational Education and Training Centre (VETC) is responsible for developing the criteria for these tests. In 2001, the development of the content of national final tests in three subjects, and of qualification examinations for 28 different professions, took place in VETC. Work groups were established for this purpose, including representatives from VET establishments, private business and professional associations.

In 2002, 4,578 students of the MoES and community-founded education institutions took the standardized qualification examinations.

In order to help the students of VET prepare successfully for the qualification examinations, MoES and VETC have published sample test question for the theoretical part, which can be found on their internet homepage (www.MoESpic.lv). In September 2001, the test items for the specialized fields of tailor, hairdresser, decorator, welder and office secretary were available.

The qualification-awarding process is provided by education establishments, or training and examination centres (TEC). In 2000/01 there were TECs for electricians, metal processing work-tops operators, car mechanics, decorators, joiners, tailors and hairdressers.

6 Development of Training Plans/Syllabi

The curriculum is stipulated by the *National Education Standards* approved by the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers. As of 1 September 2001, such standards had been adopted only for basic/initial VET.

Structure of Study/Training Programs, Determined by the VET Standard

Vocational Training, Level 2 Qualification

The ratio of theory to practice is 35:65.

General education subjects/profession-related subject's ratio is 60:40.

Division of General Education subjects:

Languages and Communication (45%).

Mathematics, Sciences, Technical Sciences (33%).

Social Studies and Cultural Studies (22%).

National Final Assessment—four examinations in the subjects depending on the respective programme/curriculum, and a qualification exam.

Structure of Study/Training Programs, Determined by the Vocational Secondary Education and Training Standard

Secondary Vocational Education and Training, Level 3 Qualification

The ratio between theory and practice is 50:50.

General education subjects/Profession-related subjects is a 60:40 ratio.

Division of General Education subjects:

Languages and Communication (45%).

Mathematics, Sciences, Technical Sciences (33%).

Social Studies and Culture Studies (22%).

National Final Assessment—four examinations in the subjects depending on the respective programme/curriculum, and a qualification examination.

In March 2001, the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on National Standard of First-Stage Higher Professional Education was adopted.

The structure of the study course is expressed in credits. One credit equals 40 hours of work. One program is 80–120 credits. For a practical placement 16 credits are awarded as well as a certificate of qualification.

In 2001, the *Register of Occupational Standards* was established, and by 1 September of the same year, 19 occupational standards had been registered in the following branches: computer administration and computer sciences, catering services, wood processing technologies and production, metal processing, printing and publishing, transport, textile production technologies and production, and business.

Study programmes are developed by education establishments following the set Occupational Standards. In order to provide these programmes, a MoES license is required. Only the graduates of accredited programmes are entitled to receive state-recognised documents certifying their professional education and qualification.

Courses are developed by teachers who teach the respective subject, and they are approved by the principal of an education establishment.

The MoES/Vocational Education and Training Centre (VETC) deals with the accreditation of VET establishments and programmes.

Before private education establishments can begin operation, they must be registered with the MoES and have a license from VETC. The VETC license entitles an institute to only issue the diploma of an education establishment. If the education establishment wishes to issue a state-recognised document of education, then its study/training programme must be accredited. To be accredited, a programme has to meet all the requirements set by the Law on Education. Study programs are developed by education establishments, following the guidelines issued by VET, ITD and VETC, the requirements of which are in agreement with the *National Secondary VET* and *VET standards*.

7 Professions for which Training is Provided

Ideally, the number of students studying a certain profession should roughly meet current market demands. It can also be the case that more students study a particular profession/occupation in anticipation of future demands.

Figure 3 indicates the ratio between the number of people employed in different branches of the Latvian national economy and the number of participants in the respective VET programmes.

This figure clearly shows that the ratio of the people currently undergoing training does not correspond to the structure of the currently employed. However, as a result of the VET reform, the situation is gradually improving. The number of students in Industry and Construction has declined, while the number of the students in the service area professions has risen drastically.

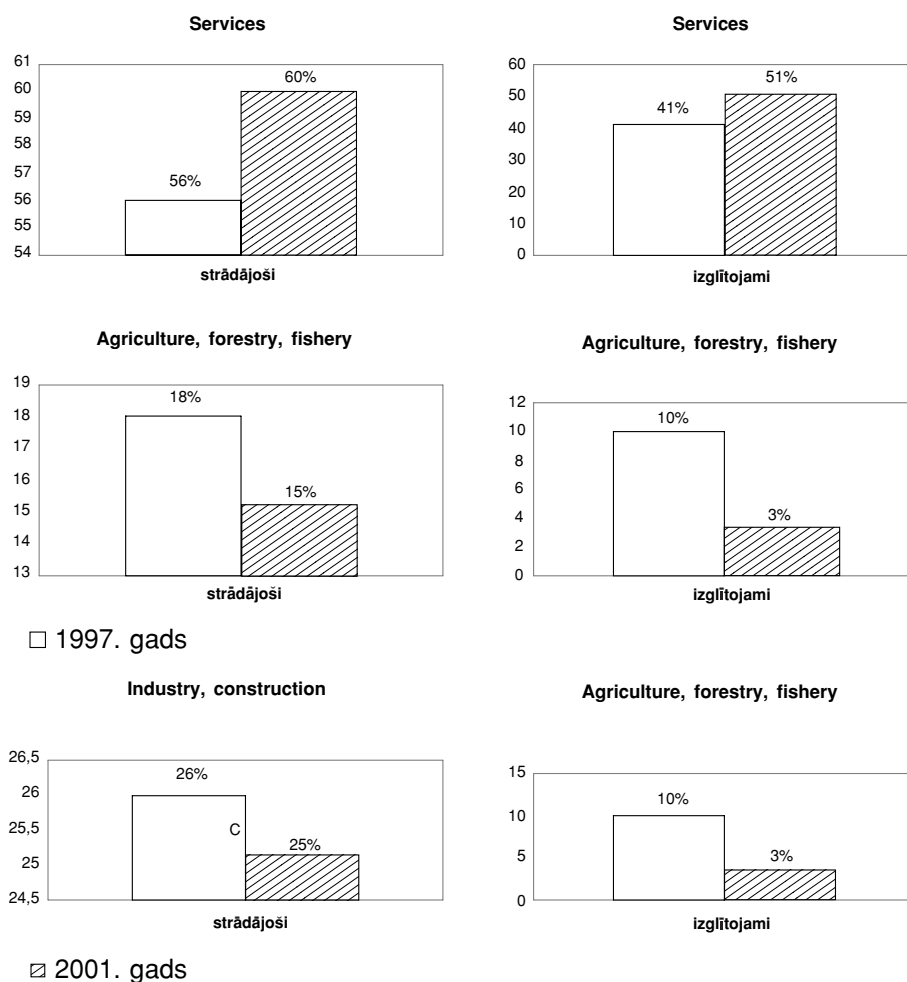


Figure 3 strādājuši (employed); izglītojami (to be trained). Source: Central Board of Statistics Latvia

8 Social Dialogue and Public Involvement

In the course of VET reform, several positive changes have taken place in the cooperation between educational establishments and employers. In 2000, the *Tripartite Cooperation Sub-council for Vocational Education and Training Reform and Employment* was established. It is a *department* of the *National Tripartite Cooperation Council*, which has been established for the promotion

of cooperation among government, employers and employees' organisations to develop and implement national policy for VET and employment. In 2000, the following issues were considered by the Council to be the most important ones:

- Draft of the National Employment Plan of Latvia for 2001.
- Development of training programmes/curricula to meet the demands of the labour market.
- Procedure for organising practical training placements.
- Procedure for organising centralised professional qualifications, *Law On the Support of Job-seekers and Unemployed*, establishment of the Register of Occupational Standards.

In April 2000, the Latvian Republic Cabinet of Ministers approved The Statutes of Vocational Education and Training Cooperation Council. In this Council there is one representative each from MoES, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Association of Latvian Municipalities, the Confederation of Employers of Latvia, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Latvia, the Association of Free Trade Unions of Latvia and one delegated representative from VET institutions which are under the jurisdiction of MoES, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture.

9 Conclusion

1. Special analysis has to be carried out on the possibilities to expand actual cooperation with social partners. The development of proposals for amendments to the laws must also be considered (i.e., tax benefits for those sponsoring VET and those providing apprentice positions within a business).
2. In order to improve career guidance for young people, proposals for training general education teachers in the area of career guidance have to be devised and submitted to MoES.
3. The VET system could be developed more rapidly, if:
 - *The fragmentation of the management of VET under the jurisdiction of different ministries is overcome*, since of course the ministries, first of all, take into consideration the interests of their branch and then solve the VET administrative issues independently from other ministries—plan the network of education establishments, enrolment of students, financial resources and, in cooperation with the education support institutions under their jurisdiction, they plan curriculum and provide education quality control.

- *Financial and material resources required for the development of schools are provided.* Many education establishments have not increased their financial resources by looking for alternative sources, or do it on a very small scale.
- *The involvement of social partners in the development of VET system is increased,* as it is now very low, though the first steps have been made for improving the situation.
- *The Vocational guidance system is improved.* In many general education schools there is no comprehensive information available on VET institutions and its programmes.
- *A VET scientific research centre is established.* The scientific research of VET is weak in general, and the funding for applied research continues to decline every year. A National Observatory cannot fully carry out the functions of a scientific centre, as they mainly confine themselves with describing the existing situation, not suggesting well-considered and evidence-based recommendations for further improvements in the system of vocational education and training.
- *Need for higher prestige of VET.* The following points can be used as evidence, for the lack of this prestige:
 - i. there is no possibility to acquire academic degrees in (Bachelor, Master) in vocational pedagogy;
 - ii. national level conferences on VET have not been held;
 - iii. specific collections of academic articles on this sector of education are not being issued;
 - iv. widely spread public opinion that only those young people, who cannot study elsewhere, go to VET institutions;
 - v. information dissemination among the public about VET institutions is weak;
 - vi. opportunities offered by mass media are not used to the full extent for promoting a positive and prestigious image of VET.

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5. Vocational Education and Training in Lithuania: Reform Processes and Tendencies

1 Introduction

Vocational education and training (VET) is the most rapidly developing part of the educational system. It is changing in accordance with the requirements of the labour market. Lithuanian vocational education reform started at the end of the 1980s, when the ‘socialist’ system collapsed and opened the door for the development of a new system. New economic relationships developed, the country’s economy was restructured, and the technological provision for manufacturing and service sectors changed rapidly. The reform of VET became an objective factor determining social economic advancement.

Such factors as the market economy, restructuring, change in the laws of ownership, democratisation of societal processes, the intention to integrate into the structures of the European Union, etc., created favourable conditions for rapid changes in the system of VET. Vocational education reform, launched more than a decade ago, was pursued very swiftly. It summoned the efforts and experience of all the participants in vocational education from other countries, to help develop VET into a well-rounded education and to meet the challenges of rapid change in the country.

Up to 1990, the system of the Lithuanian VET developed along the general model of the Soviet Union, and can therefore be characterised as follows:

- Centralisation, manifested in subordinate decision-making on various levels—all the decision-making procedures were subordinate to higher party, economic and education organisations.

- Close relationships between vocational education institutions and the largest enterprises, using their material resources for student practical training.
- Monolithic and rigid teaching curriculum, developed in specialised VET institutions and compulsory for all vocational education institutions.
- Low prestige of VET, in great part determined by student being encouraged to pursue professions.

The initial reform of VET in Lithuania proceeded as a complicated multi-layered activity of renewing various vocational education processes on three levels: first, on the national level—by making political decisions on the changes involving (regulating) the whole system; second, on the school level—by making appropriate decisions that determine vocational education relations on the teaching institution level and on the class level; and third, by changing the nature of student–teacher as well as teaching–curriculum interaction.

In 2003, a research study on VET reform was carried out under the initiative of the European Training Foundation and the Vytautas Magnus University. Its purpose was to identify the main processes of VET reform and evaluate their adequacy for the general principles of reform and also to define the changes and problems in vocational education and training on the national, school and class levels. The research methodology is based on the works by Braskamp, Ory (1994), Bonz (2000), Compter (1998), Laužackas (1999), (2002), Uhe (2000), Bernard (2002) and others, and also on the normative vocational education and training documents and research outcomes: the Law on Vocational education and training in the Republic of Lithuania (1997), Human resource development and lifelong learning in Lithuania (2003), A cross-country analysis of curricular reform in VET in central and Eastern Europe (1998), Assessment of the Implementation of the 2001 Employment Guidelines (2001) and others.

2 Vocational Education and Training Policy and its Implementation at the National Level

During the 12 years of the reform in Lithuania, a stable system of vocational education and training emerged. The system has met the demands of the labour market and education, its characteristics and priorities have adhered to the unified European standard system.

Initial vocational education and training in Lithuania is performed by institutions of three types: vocational schools, advanced vocational schools and colleges. Having graduated from the main school, students have an opportunity to continue learning at a secondary school or gymnasium, or at a vocational school. The graduates can choose a vocational school (and learn according

to the programmes of stage 4), an advanced vocational school or a college/university.

Vocational schools are educational institutions that provide vocational qualification and secondary education. They offer study programmes on four levels. The programmes differ in their duration and teaching content, and are adapted to young people of various ages and different educational background. The first level is for persons who have not acquired the basic education and intend to acquire a professional qualification.

The programmes in the second level last for 2 years and provide professional qualification upon the completion of studies. The programmes of the third level last for 3 years and create opportunities for students to obtain a professional qualification together with secondary school leaving certificate. Secondary school graduates who intend to acquire a professional qualification are admitted to the programmes of the fourth level. This study course is for 2 or 3 years.

Advanced vocational schools are educational institutions which provide professional qualification and post-secondary upper education. With the intent of bringing the Lithuanian qualification system in line with the qualification system of the European countries, a reform of post-secondary studies was launched in 2000; the purpose of the reform was to eliminate the provision of upper post-secondary education. During the reform, a new segment of education and qualification system was created: non-university higher education studies. They were launched in new institutions—colleges—on the basis of advanced vocational schools.

Colleges are institutions of higher education which provide professional qualification and non-university higher education. Studies last for 3 years, and after the completion of the programme the students acquire a diploma of higher education and proper professional qualification. This new segment of educational system broadens opportunities for young people to acquire higher education and expands the range of initial vocational education and training programmes.

In September 2003, there were 82 vocational schools in Lithuania, 16 advanced vocational schools and 16 colleges. The state was the founder of the majority of vocational, advanced vocational schools and colleges. The Ministry of Education and Science administers the work of all the vocational schools. Since 2000, reformers have been optimising the vocational education network to better meet regional labour market demands. Vocational schools with a small number of students were merged into more efficient regional vocational education and training centres. Advanced vocational schools were reorganised into colleges or vocational schools.

At present, a smaller number of students study at institutions of initial VET (vocational schools, advanced vocational schools and colleges) than at

universities. This can be explained by the fact that during the last 10 years, higher university education has become more accessible and more valued in society. Concurrently, the prestige of VET institutions has remained rather low.

Vocational schools are governed by a tripartite principle: social partners, employers and representatives of trade unions and regional vocational education boards, who are all involved in the management and decision-making process. The state budget provides the main financing source of all vocational education institutions. Aimed at ensuring the quality of VET, as well as providing professional competences to meet labour market demands, school leaving examinations and qualification provision were transferred in 2003 to the employers—regional chambers of commerce, industry and crafts.

The number of vocational teachers has changed only slightly, and now stands at approximately 10,000. Although there is no lack of vocational teachers in the system of VET, the lack of adequate qualification of teachers is still a great problem. During the first stages of initial vocational reform, the preparation of vocational teachers was rather chaotic and lacked consistency.

3 Assumptions of VET Reform in Lithuania

In recent decades, the attempts to define vocational education and training have changed considerably (English vocational education, German *Berufsbildung*), i.e., from the narrow understanding of a person's preparation for a specific working place to the broadest concepts which includes lifelong learning, the information society and human resource development.

Economic and labour processes have acquired an international dimension. Their nature is determined by global factors: world trade, use of advanced technology and international politics. Technological, as well as economic and financial activity, have lost the so-called 'local' factor. The development of the European labour market has affected the conditions of competition and employability that existed heretofore. High qualifications, as described by the International Standards and Continuous Education, have simply become a must for everyone. These are general assumptions related to worldwide tendencies and changes.

However, specific assumptions characterising the process of integration of Lithuania into the democratic European community, its specific political, economic and cultural features, as well as its differences are nonetheless important. The transition from the 'planned' to the 'market' economy led to acute changes in people's economic, social and spiritual life. The goals set by the European Union to become, in general, more knowledge-based and economically competitive corresponded to Lithuanian objectives.

The increase in the importance of vocational education is determined by constant changes in the structures of professions and their content. So-called ‘unskilled’ or ‘moderately skilled’ work has disappeared. These days even the most ordinary jobs such as cleaning, construction and catering require knowledge and training in new technology. The most ordinary tasks are today carried out by machines and equipment. The development of technology has had such an effect on the economy and society that people who enter the labour market today cannot expect to work at the same job all their lives, to have one speciality, and to remain in the same work sector throughout their lives. Specialists agree that today’s youth will have to change profession several times throughout their working career.

4 Stages in Lithuanian Vocational Education Reform

The reform of vocational education was launched soon after the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990. Aiming to guarantee the accessibility of initial (VET) and provide opportunities for every citizen to acquire a profession according to a person’s interests and abilities, four-stage teaching programmes were introduced in 1990 into vocational schools. In technical advanced schools, which used to provide special secondary education, the programmes of advanced vocational studies were introduced.

In analysing the development and achievements of the Lithuanian vocational education reform during the first decade, three main stages can be distinguished:

- *Reform: stage 1*, from 1988 to 1992. During this stage, the vision for vocational education was created, vocational education policy and strategy formulated, and international cooperation developed. However, this period can be called ‘the period of observing “what’s happening”’, as there were practically no systematic efforts to affect the process on the political level.
- *Reform: stage 2*, in 1993–96. A period of ‘decentralisation’, when, focusing on the principle of decentralisation, vocational education institutions were given more initiative. During this stage, the greatest attention was devoted to the renewal of the teaching curriculum, implementation of technologies into the educational process, and social partnership development, aimed at the more active participation of educational institutions in the formation of vocational education politics and strategy and the development of teaching curriculum. However, vocational education management institutions failed both to ensure proper coordination of decentralisation processes and to divert the vocational institutions to meet common national interests.

- *Reform: stage 3.* Started in 1997 as a realisation of meaningful and research-based policy. It was triggered by the perception that a centralised approach and solid coherence of interests are necessary for vocational education. At this point, a number of very important vocational *education infrastructural formations* emerged which had to initiate and implement the policy, express the interests of various social partners, and make competent decisions. Furthermore, centres for vocational education *scientific research and methodological management* were established, with priority given to the preparation of vocational education standards and teaching-curriculum development, enhancement of interaction between social partners, improvement of vocational education teacher and executive preparation, implementation of quality assurance system, and the formation of vocational education policy and strategy (the ‘*Law on the Lithuanian Vocational Education*’ was passed and vocational education ‘*White Papers*’ written).

5 Parameters and Results of Vocational Education Reform

Evaluating the strategy and policy of vocational education, experts noted that the greatest progress came in fusing the policy of vocational education with strategic objectives of the country and preparing strategic documents. The least progress was noted in the preparation of normative documents of vocational education reform necessary for strategy realisation.

Analysing the vocational education strategy and policy problems, experts emphasised the lack of policy realisation resources as being the most important problem; another major problem was indifference on the part of politicians.

The management of initial vocational education on the state level is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science of Lithuania. The major functions of the Ministry are as follows: development of state vocational education norms, organisation of educational institution supervision, teacher qualification development and certification, etc. The Lithuanian Vocational Education Council is an advisory institution of the Lithuanian government which carries out the functions of counselling, expertise and coordination when making decisions on vocational education issues.

On the regional level, county vocational education councils participate as advisory institutions in vocational education management.

They offer expertise, counselling and coordinating functions. During the reform, which was aimed at the decentralisation of initial vocational education management and developing the participation of social partners in vocational

education and training, a majority of management functions were transferred to vocational education institutions, social partners and their regional structures. Schools were given more responsibility for the renewal of the teaching curriculum, obtaining teaching aids, modernisation of equipment, etc.

Lack of management personnel competence and inefficiency of management measures still remain problems in the management of vocational education. The following important problems are: lack of regulations and normative documents and indefiniteness of politics. The coordination between management institutions was mentioned as being least problematic.

During the last 6 years of the reform, the financing of vocational education increased by 74.73%, whereas the financing of universities increased by 150%, and colleges by 100%. This indicates that the importance of higher education in Lithuania has grown more rapidly than the importance of other segments of vocational education.

The state budget is the major financial source of vocational education (92% of the total financing). Other sources are: municipality budgets, vocational training foundation, etc. During the reform, the fields of commercial-economic activity were expanded in vocational education institutions.

At present there are two institutions in Lithuania whose activity is directly related to research into the labour market and vocational education areas. These are *The Labour and Social Research Institute* and the *Centre for Vocational Education and Research* at Vytautas Magnus University. Other institutions (university units, employer associations, trade union associations, enterprises and organisations, educational institutions, single teachers, etc.) do research on vocational education and training only periodically.

Extensive research in VET has been carried out in the *Centre for Vocational Education and Research* at Vytautas Magnus University since its establishment in 1996. Three research-based monographs were published, two doctor habilitation dissertations, and five doctor dissertations have been defended. The Centre carries out Master studies in vocational education management; within this framework, master students perform research in the field of vocational education on national, and school and class levels (15–20 research units per year). A number of innovative ideas were realised within the framework of international programmes (i.e., *Leonardo da Vinci*, *Phare*, *Socrates*).

Research results are regularly disseminated in the scientific journal '*Vocational Education: Research and Reality*' which has been published since 1997 (in Lithuanian and English).

The European Union *PHARE* programme has become the main supporter of VET reform since 1993; its support manifests itself in meaningful projects that are implemented in various areas of education. The major problems that hinder the efficient use of international programmes are passive

participation in vocational education institutions and the lack of foreign language competence.

The restructuring of the teaching curriculum was oriented towards broad activity areas, thus rejecting narrow specialisation teaching programmes. Until 1990, the teaching curriculum was developed in a centralised way. At the beginning of the reform, this function was transferred to vocational education institutions.

Schools were allowed to make choices themselves as to which professions they would educate specialists. Therefore, often popular and modern professions were chosen or, out of inertia, the schools continued to prepare specialists for the same professions. Even by 1996, the planning of vocational education demand was not based on any labour market research or prognosis.

Aimed at increasing the transparency and comparability of VET, as well as ensuring more efficiency in meeting labour market demands, the development of a system of standards regulating vocational education began in 1998. The model of VET used in Lithuania includes the competences necessary for a profession, teaching goals and assessment criteria. In order to more precisely determine the professions demanded by the labour market, as well as determining the necessary qualifications, sector research was begun in 2000 (in accordance with the PHARE programme).

According to experts, the main problem encountered in curriculum renewal is insufficient preparation of vocational teachers and school executives and their passive participation in the reform process. Lack of methodologies for curriculum renewal is also a problematic area.

Achievement evaluation and qualification recognition in the reformed system area were transferred to the responsibility of the employers. Since 2002, final evaluation and qualification recognition has been performed by employer organisations—i.e., regional Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts.

The final examination in vocational school consists of both a theoretical and a practical skill parts.

Advanced vocational school students who intend to obtain a certificate, conferring educational institution completion and acquisition of education, have to take a final examination (assignments and exam tickets are prepared by specially qualified teachers), or write a diploma paper that is evaluated by a qualification committee comprised of three specialists-practitioners: a field specialist, a school administrator and a committee secretary.

Vocational teacher preparation has always been one of the most problematic areas of VET. At the beginning of vocational education reform, vocational teacher preparation proceeded in a rather chaotic way, lacking consistency and coherence. Vocational teacher preparation was inefficient in some higher education institutions.

For the first time, a more explicit approach to vocational teacher preparation was formulated in the vocational education *White Papers*.

However, even today the majority of vocational teachers lack pedagogical qualification. Often their training was acquired a long time ago and, thus, is obsolete in meeting the requirements of contemporary vocational education.

It was determined that the average age of the Lithuanian vocational teacher and lecturer is from 31 to 50 years. The majority (62.34%) are certificated specialists in their field of specialisation. However, the majority of *this* group (76.16%) have no formal pedagogical education; on the other hand, approximately 70% have more than 10 years of pedagogical work experience and have acquired various pedagogical competences.

A 2 year integrated modular initial vocational teacher preparation programme, based on research data, was prepared according to the PHARE programme. In 2001, the Vocational Teacher/Lecturer Professional standard was prepared in the Leonardo da Vinci project and the Conception for Vocational Teacher/Lecturer Education and Training in Lithuania. A plan for its realisation was prepared with the support of the European Training Foundation project. The plan is for prospective teachers to acquire their subject competence in colleges or universities, and then work for 3 years. Teachers start their pedagogical qualification studies as soon as they are employed in vocational education institutions. These studies are provided by universities according to modular pedagogical vocational teacher programmes.

Seeking to improve vocational education quality and ensure its adequacy for labour market demands, there has been, from the beginning, a search for methods on how to involve social partners into vocational education processes. According to experts, the best results were achieved in the involvement of social partners into qualification provision and examination.

The greatest problems in improving social partnerships, according to experts, were the lack of resources, and the lack of employer interest in participating in vocational education management.

Prior to the reform of VET, a professional orientation system had been in operation in Lithuania. One of the goals of this system was to send weaker students to learn in vocational schools regardless of what they themselves wanted. Now the most important problems in vocational counselling are, according to the experts, underdeveloped vocational counselling systems in general education schools, lack of qualified counsellors, the absence of a vocational counselling strategy and methodology.

The Lithuanian VET system has inherited the poor vocational education image of Soviet times—vocational technical teaching, least advanced learners selected from general schools and sent to study at vocational schools—and the general belief that vocational schools provide low value and useless knowledge

(both vocational and general). This legacy is reflected to a certain extent in the reformed system of VET. At present this attitude to vocational education and training is rapidly changing on the state level, particularly due to European Union directives and extensive attention to this area.

According to experts, at the start of reform, *accessibility* to vocational education did not receive adequate attention, especially in integrating the long-term unemployed, and former prison inmates into the system of VET. The main problems in improving accessibility to vocational education are the lack of financial resources needed to obtain teaching equipment, adapting schools to students with special needs and the lack of teacher qualification in working with students with special needs.

Expert evaluations of ensuring lifelong learning area were highest when evaluating the development of labour market vocational education system and efforts to provide basic lifelong learning skills. It is necessary to note that the above mentioned processes had not existed prior to reform.

At present, 24 colleges are located throughout Lithuania. The sector of non-university higher education is considered to be practically fully restructured. Carrying out the optimisation of vocational education institution networks, vocational schools located in a certain territory were merged into more powerful and considerably more efficient units, i.e., regional vocational education centres. As of today, seven such centres have been created.

Experts consider the inertness and resistance of educational institutions to be the most important problems of vocational education institution network optimisation. Other relevant problems are: lack of optimisation methodology and necessary documents, the problem of making well-grounded decisions and the lack of financial resources.

6 Change in Vocational Education on the Teaching Institution Level

Vision and Strategy of Vocational Education Institutions

A number of respondents indicated that at present, in the area of vocational education institution vision and strategy—development and implementation—priorities are defined properly; material resources are used rationally; the activity in this area is coordinated with national and international developmental plans.

The development of vocational education institution vision and during the pre-reform period was evaluated as positive by 36.9% of the respondents, whereas now it stands at 63.8%. The implementation of vision and strategy

was enhanced by the active participation of the executives of institutions and pedagogical personnel as well as a general openness to progressive innovation.

Creating and implementing the vision and strategy of vocational education institution, the following problems were encountered: lack of resources, indefiniteness of policy and lack of regulations and normative documents. The solution to these problems depends mainly on the priorities of the educational management institutions and the active participation of the vocational education institution itself in its search for new self-financing resources. Still, the emphasis on the indefiniteness of policy indicates an insufficient understanding of vocational education vision on the national level.

Development and implementation of vocational education institution vision and strategy corresponded by and large to the key reform principles. However, the support of international experts and programmes was not efficiently used, and the implementation policy and tactics were not always properly chosen. The vision and strategy of vocational education institution were more actively developed and implemented in the first half of the reform, whereas in the second half this has tapered off. Implementation of the vision was mostly hindered by a lack of resources, indefiniteness of vocational education policy and the lack of regulation and normative documents.

The priorities in this development are as follows: dissemination of foreign experience, increase in the responsibility given to institution executives and pedagogical personnel, and an emphasis on the necessity of having a vision and strategy at the national political level.

Vocational Education Institution Management

A number of the respondents stated that, at present, in the area of vocational education management the priorities were set properly, material resources were used rationally, the activity coordinated with national and international plans of development. The use of international experts, programme support and reference to scientific research were evaluated as being poor.

Whereas involvement of pedagogical personnel in the management of institutions prior to the reform was evaluated by 31.9% of the respondents as positive, that percentage has reached 80.8% of the respondents. Improvement in teacher involvement in institutional management can be explained by following the democratic principles in vocational education institution management, increase in the competence of institution executives, and increased voluntary active participation of vocational teachers.

Involvement of social partners in the management of vocational education institutions prior to the reform was viewed positively by only 25.5% of the respondents. It registers as high as 59.6% today.

The involvement of community (parents, students, municipal representatives, etc.) in the management of vocational education institution prior to the reform was positively evaluated at that time at 23.4%; today it is 44.7% of the respondents. However, only a slight increase was found in the scope of community involvement—21.1%. This tendency was determined by the fact that, prior to the reform, there were no traditions of community participation in vocational education institution management activity.

The following problems were faced in vocational education institution management area: lack of resources, indefiniteness of politics and lack of regulations and normative documents.

Vocational education institution management during the reform can be characterised by properly chosen priorities, the rational use of material resources and coordination with national developmental plans. However, the support of international programmes and foreign experts were insufficiently used and little reference was made to scientific research in the development of management.

During the reform the scope of involvement of pedagogical personnel, social partners, and the students and teachers in the management of institutions increased substantially.

The main hindrances to institutional management development are the lack of resources, indefiniteness of politics and the lack of regulations and normative documents. The activity of institutional management development should be expanded by improving relations with social partners and the community, and making more use of scientific methodology.

Teaching-Curriculum Renewal

According to the majority of the respondents, curriculum renewal priorities were set properly, vocational curriculum renewal was coordinated with national and international developmental plans, and material resources were used rationally in curriculum renewal.

Prior to the reform, the design of new teaching programmes adequate to labour market demands was positively evaluated at 29.8%; today it is up to 89.4%. This change can be explained by the fact that vocational education programme developers paid due regard to the rapidly changing employment structure during the period of economic restructuring and emergence of new professions and activity areas.

The development of the teaching programmes, in regard to the changes in the field of employment prior to the reform was positively evaluated at 34.1%. In contrast, the present development of teaching programmes was positively evaluated at 88.4%.

The analysis of the research findings indicates significant positive changes in the development of the new material: 42.6% of the respondents positively evaluated the development of the new teaching material in the pre-reform era, whereas today, it stands at a healthy 75.1%.

Curriculum renewal has encountered the following problems: lack of resources and indefiniteness of politics, which determines the trends of vocational education curriculum development. A considerable number of respondents believe the lack of regulations and normative documents to be a significant problem in the teaching-curriculum renewal.

The change in vocational education curriculum was evaluated positively. On the national level, a properly developed infrastructure exerted a considerable impact here, as did the establishment of vocational education standards. The development of the teaching programmes was decentralised. The curriculum renewal on the school level can be characterised by properly set priorities, coordinated with national and international developmental plans, and rational use of material resources.

Poor evaluations were attributed to the use of international programmes and vocational curriculum renewal politics. It was noticed that the development of the new teaching programmes and the improvement of the current programmes were constantly increasing with regard to the changes in the labour market. Improvement in the new teaching material development has not been significant. External problems predominate in the teaching-curriculum renewal: lack of resources, indefiniteness of politics and lack of regulations and normative documents. Lack of methodology and methods and teacher passive participation were evaluated as being less important problems. Further success of vocational education curriculum renewal is related to properly set priorities, involvement of social partners and development of pedagogical qualification.

The greatest impact upon the development of the teaching curriculum was exerted by teacher in-service training and international projects (Phare, Leonardo da Vinci and others). The least influence was exerted by foreign experts, and science and research institution (e.g., universities) activities. Vocational education institutions are recommended to expand their cooperation with foreign educational institutions, and to take up and maintain closer relations with science and research institutions.

Quality Assurance

According to the respondents, vocational education quality assurance priorities were set properly, scientific research and methodology were implemented, the quality of vocational education improved due to a more efficient use of resources.

Quality assurance activity prior to the reform was positively evaluated at only 8.7% at present it stands at 82.9%. This change in the evaluation can be explained by the fact that this area, prior to the reform, was not popular and was actively discouraged.

The situation in teaching programme self-analysis prior to the reform was positively evaluated at 12.8%. Currently it stands at 78.7%. The reason for this change is that teaching programme self-analysis has become the basis for vocational teaching quality assurance system and vocational teachers have acquired more knowledge and skills in this area.

Evaluating the main problems encountered in vocational education quality assurance system development, the respondents noted lack of resources as the main problem.

The systematic vocational education quality assurance first emerged during reform. It was marked by properly set priorities and reference to scientific research.

However, there was a lack of consistency in quality assurance and the use of international programmes. Not all employees of the educational institution were involved in quality assurance activity. The major problems in this activity were as follows: lack of resources, lack of the necessary information and didactic materials and indefiniteness of policy. The development of quality assurance activity is related to its constant development and improvement and employee in-service training.

Vocational Teacher In-Service Training

The system of vocational teacher in-service training prior to the reform was positively evaluated by 21.3% of the respondents, whereas the present situation in this area reached 70.2%. This shows that the development of vocational teacher in-service training paid due regard to vocational teacher motivation to improve qualifications.

Evaluating the problems of vocational teacher in-service training, respondents indicated lack of resources, indefiniteness of politics and lack of regulations and normative documents.

Qualitative changes were observed in vocational teacher in-service training: the number of teachers who upgraded their qualification increased. However, it is necessary to mark qualitative indicators: qualification upgrading priorities and their implementation policy were evaluated negatively, as were the activity of internal experts and personnel preparation. The major problems in this area are: indefiniteness of policy, lack of regulations and normative documents and lack of methodology and didactics. A large number of respondents who did not have a firm opinion indicated the problem of individual teacher development. This development of this activity is related to the development of educational

institution as a learning organisation, and the encouragement of the activity of in-service training within the educational institution itself.

The following changes in vocational teacher in-service training were indicated: the highest increase occurred in the indicator 'personality competence' and the lowest in 'teaching subject content (subject) competence and didactic (teaching) competence'. The evaluation of the indicator of subject qualification development projects and seminars in other educational institutions also increased, the lowest rate of increase was found with the indicator employer organised courses and seminars and traineeships in foreign vocational education institutions. The following important measures in in-service vocational teacher training can be recommended: development and implementation of the methodology of qualification development needs identification, improvement of essential subject and didactical competence, implementation of a system to encourage participation in various vocational competence development measures, strengthening partnerships with employers and foreign vocational education institutions, organisation of consultations with more experienced colleagues, creating conditions for teacher personnel development, enhancing participation in project activity and taking up closer relations with higher schools.

Dissemination of Innovative Experience

The dissemination of innovative experience by preparation seminars, training and other measures prior to the reform was positively evaluated at 29.8%. The present situation shows this to be up to 78.7%. These data indicate that vocational education institutions sufficiently acquired and developed the methods of innovative experience.

The dissemination of innovative experience was successfully developed in vocational education institutions by preparing articles, flyers, various publications, internet pages, preparing seminars, training, and by organising teacher activity on the basis of team and project methods. Material resources and internal experts were efficiently used in the development of this activity. International cooperation and participation in various international dissemination programmes were evaluated poorly. The major problems were lack of resources, absence of the necessary information and passive participation of teachers. An important success factor in innovative experience dissemination was the increase in teacher motivation and willingness to accept this experience and pass it on to others.

Learning Achievement Evaluation

The majority of the respondents positively evaluated the coherence of learning achievement evaluation and qualification recognition with national and

international activity plans, rational use of material resources in this area, preparation of internal experts and personnel. Demands of the labour market were followed in evaluating learner knowledge and skills, and recognition of their qualifications. Further, employers, chambers of industry, commerce, and crafts and social partners were involved in the assessment process.

Organisation of competence-based teaching prior to the reform was positively evaluated at 25.5% but today registers 74.5%.

A great improvement in this area was triggered by the development of vocational teacher/lecturer professional standard and requirement, used to create vocational teaching programmes.

Pre-reform involvement of employer organisations in the learning achievement evaluation and qualification recognition process was positively evaluated at 38.3%. This is now up to 80.8%. This drastic change can be explained by the fact that vocational education institutions have in the meantime acquired significant experience in cooperating with employers.

The organisation of independent evaluation on the regional and national level prior to reform had a positive result of only 14.9%. Today this has reached 46.9%. The chief reason for such a result is that vocational education has become increasingly more related to regional human resource infrastructure and has had to rise to its demands.

In evaluating learning achievement evaluation and qualification recognition problems, the majority of the respondents noted a lack of financial resources, similar to the other areas. Lack of employer participation was marked.

Learning achievement assessment and qualification recognition reform was evaluated cautiously by the respondents, by not expressing a firm opinion with regard to its adequacy to reform principles. Doubts were expressed with respect to the use of scientific research and methodology, proper preparation of internal experts, the coordination of learning achievement assessment and qualification recognition system with national and international development plans. It was noted that the scope of employer organisation involvement in this process had been increasing prior to the reform and continued to increase, though their passive participation and lack of special preparation formed one of the greatest assessment and qualification recognition problems. Problematic areas in this respect are indefiniteness of national learning achievement assessment and recognition policy, lack of methodology and didactics and the lack of resources.

Accessibility to Vocational Education

Research results indicate the most favourable respondent evaluations with regard to the coherence of vocational education accessibility with national and

international development plans, reference to scientific research and methodology and rational use of material resources.

Accessibility of initial vocational education to at-risk groups prior to the reform was positively evaluated by 8.5% of the respondents; the present situation in this area was positively evaluated at 46.9%. These data show that vocational education institutions made progress during the reform by creating better learning conditions to at-risk groups.

Evaluating the problems encountered in increasing the accessibility to vocational education, the respondents highlighted the lack of resources. Another important vocational education accessibility problem was passive participation of people who belong to at-risk groups.

Accessibility to vocational education corresponds to the reform principles in many respects. Accessibility coheres most with national and international developmental plans, scientific research results and rational use of material resources. However, for a great number of vocational teachers, the problem of learning accessibility is little known or not very important. At-risk group's accessibility to initial vocational education was evaluated as being poorer than for adults, including the unemployed.

Strengthening the Social Partnership

Respondents agree that in the area of social partnership, efficient use of materials, and social partnership, priorities are set properly. However, they note that international experts and programmes are not properly made use of.

Involvement of social partners in the activity and management of vocational education institutions prior to the reform was positively evaluated at 27.7%. Currently this stands at 42.5%. The data indicate that the reform encouraged social partners to participate in the activity and management of vocational education institutions.

Involvement of social partners into the development and renewal of the teaching programmes and their renewal prior to the reform was positively evaluated by 19.1% of the respondents. This is now up to 57.4%.

Social partner involvement in the learning achievement assessment and qualification recognition process prior to the reform was positively evaluated at 34%. At present it is 78.7%. This change in evaluation was due to increased cooperation of vocational education institutions with employers aiming at better preparation of the necessary specialists and coordinating the outcomes of vocational schools with labour market demands.

Social partner involvement in the teaching organisation prior to the reform was given a positive evaluation by 53.2% of the respondents. This has grown

moderately to 61.7%. The relatively small change in the evaluation was due to the fact that prior to the reform, employers were already actively participating in practical training organisations and creating favourable conditions for student practical training.

The enhancement of social partnership in vocational education area has also run into the problems of the lack of resources and the passive participation of social partners.

Social partnership is at largely up to the tasks of the reform principles, however respondents envisage less progress in this area than in others. The scope of involvement of social partners in the activity of vocational education institutions is now evaluated as being slightly higher than before the reform, whereas their involvement in the education process during the reform has received a lower evaluation. Better results are seen in social partner participation in the vocational education activity on the national level (policy formation, professional standard development activity, etc.). Social partner participation in the teaching programme development and their involvement in evaluation and qualification recognition activity received a good evaluation. The greatest room for social partnership improvement is the increase in employer interest.

Vocational Education Research

The use of the research into specialist demand prior to the reform was positively evaluated by 6.4% of the respondents; at present this is 55.3%. This sharp increase in the evaluation of the use of the specialist demand research was caused by transition away from the planned economy.

The use of research into professions and qualification aiming at improving the teaching programmes, or preparing new programmes, prior to the reform was given a positive evaluation by only 6.4%, whereas now it has shot to a 74.5% positive evaluation. The transition from the 'planned' to the 'market' economy brought about the necessity to perform research into those professions attempting to overhaul or design new teaching programmes.

Research into the efficiency of vocational education process prior to the reform was positively evaluated at 14.9%; at present it is 63.8%. The increase in the use of research was caused by the increase in competition between vocational education institutions, the development of professional standards, increase in labour market demands, increase in the qualification of the pedagogical personnel implementation of the new, active teaching methods, etc.

The major problems encountered in the vocational education research area: lack of resources, indefiniteness of policy and the lack of necessary information.

The scope of vocational education research is insufficiently adequate to the reform principles. Though vocational education research is coordinated

with national and international developmental plans and research methodology, there still is no clear policy for implementation, and little reference is made to international expert and programme support. The greatest positive changes were achieved in the new vocational education programmes and the performance in the teaching process efficiency research. The area of least positive changes was seen in the research into the specialist demand area. It was noted that the lack of resources, indefiniteness of policy and the lack of information are the most important barriers in carrying out research. The most significant problem is that research in general is not considered to be a priority reform.

Project Activity

Project proposal preparation activity prior to the reform was positively evaluated only by 2.1% of the respondents, whereas now it stands at a remarkable 80.8%. Project (international project) activity did not exist at vocational education institutions prior to the reform, thus, the highest positive change was seen in this area. The following explanation could be provided: due to project activity, vocational education institutions received huge material and intellectual support from various Lithuanian and foreign foundations.

Participation as partners in projects coordinated by other institutions, prior to the reform, was positively evaluated by 4.3% of the respondent, at present it stands at 74.5%.

Cooperation with foreign partners prior to the reform was positively evaluated by 6.4% of the respondents and is now reached 74.5%. During the reform, new unrestricted opportunities emerged for vocational education institutions to start up cooperation with foreign partners and these opportunities were well explored. Poor foreign language competence, differences in work culture and ethics, and the lack of project work skills are the barriers to be overcome in the future.

In participating in international and national programmes (projects), the following significant problems have been encountered: the lack of resources, the lack of methodology and methods and the lack of competence.

Self-financing of VET

Adequacy of vocational education self-financing in the reform was not highly evaluated, though progress was made in all the areas of self-financing (except student provided services or realisation of the manufactured production) during the reform. The greatest progress was achieved in the area of self-financing through projects. The major problems in vocational education self-financing were: lack of initial resources, indefiniteness of policy and lack

of regulations and normative documents. Increase in vocational education self-financing was related to more active participation in project activity (particularly in international and social foundation programmes), increase in the scope of the provided paid services, improvement of vocational education prestige, growth in learner manufactured production realisation and rational use of real estate.

Impact of Vocational Education Institutions upon Regional Development

The majority of the respondents indicated priorities were set properly that enhanced the impact of vocational education institution upon the regional development, implementation policy was chosen properly, and material resources were used rationally.

The service provision activity of the vocational education institution prior to the reform received a 34% positive evaluation. At present it stands at 70.2%. Of the three indicators of the vocational education's impact upon regional development, it was in this area that the highest increase was recorded.

The increase in vocational education's impact upon regional development was adequate to the reform principles. Positive changes were determined in all the activity areas: self-advertising and organisation of various events, development of vocational education institutions as regional community centres, etc. The main problems were as follows: lack of resources, indefiniteness of politics, lack of regulations and normative documents, lack of interest, etc. The solution to these problems largely depends on the priorities of educational management institutions and active participation of vocational education institutions themselves looking for new ways to increase the impact of vocational education institutions upon the regional development.

7 Tendencies in Vocational Education and Training on the Class Level

During the reform, vocational education institutions were intensively computerised, new computer classes were established and the importance and use of foreign language competence was emphasised. The research results indicate the efficiency of these measures. Improvement in student computer skills and foreign language competence helped to develop their skills in using information resources, and in interpreting and conveying information. On the other hand, speaking, listening and math skills showed a less substantial increase due to the lack of measures activating the training of these skills.

Marked changes in the area of student education in vocational education institutions were: most improvement shown in computer work skills and foreign language competence; the least improvement in math skills and general student achievement. The following most important measures were recommended to improve vocational education for the student: enhancing vocational education prestige and learning motivation, knowledge of employment perspectives in the chosen profession and acquired professional qualification (employability enhancement).

Vocational Teacher Competence

The majority of the respondents claim that vocational teacher competence considerably improved during the reform. Vocational teacher participation in subject qualification development projects and studies at higher schools increased. Vocational teachers were active participants in various events organised by teacher in-service institutions. The number of teachers who went to traineeships in foreign vocational institutions increased as well.

Use of Methodological and Practical Aids in the Teaching Process

The situation regarding the use of technical and methodological means in the teaching process was as follows: the most frequently used technical teaching aids were information technologies and visual teaching aids; the least frequently used measures were knowledge gained in international projects and group work methods. The most important measures recommended to improve the use of technical and methodological aids were: enhancement of vocational teacher participation in qualification development events and teacher qualification development fostering, adaptation to constantly changing labour market demands, and the acceptance of foreign experience.

The changes in the teaching methodology: the most frequently used teaching methods and forms were in teacher–student projects and individual student activity; the least frequently applied teaching methods and forms were lectures and practicums.

The most important measures recommended to improve the application of the teaching methods and forms: enhancement of vocational teacher participation in various didactical seminars and courses, as well as creating conditions for colleagues to share their experiences.

Notable changes in the teaching method and form application area: the most frequently applied methods and forms were the teacher–student project and independent student work; the least applied teaching methods and forms

were lectures and practicums. The most important measures recommended to improve the application of the teaching methods and forms: enhancement of vocational teacher participation in various seminars and courses, as well making it possible for colleagues to share their work experiences.

Vocational Teacher Participation in Curriculum Renewal

On the basis of respondent answers it is possible to state that vocational teachers were active participants in various curriculum renewal measures. Teachers most often participated in annual teaching programme restructuring, teaching programme analysis, teaching programme improvement and new programme development activities.

Such active vocational teacher participation in the teaching curriculum activity was a result of the following factors: curriculum-renewal decentralisation, enhancement of vocational teacher participation in the teaching programme development and the necessity to constantly adapt the curriculum to the rapidly changing labour market requirements. The analysis of research data revealed little use of international experience in developing teaching programmes.

Teacher qualification exerted the highest impact upon curriculum development. Curriculum development was greatly affected by international projects (*Phare, Leonardo da Vinci*, etc.), involvement of social partners in the teaching process, activity of the Ministry of Education and Science, Methodical Centre for Vocational Education, institutional science and research activity (e.g., university activity), international expert support.

Vocational teacher participation in vocational curriculum renewal: vocational teachers participate mostly in annual teaching programme restructuring and teaching programme self-analysis activity; teachers are least active in performing analysis of other countries' teaching programmes and research into specialist demand activities.

The following measures were recommended to increase teacher activity in curriculum renewal: enhancement of teaching-curriculum renewal decentralisation, active participation in developing and renewing teaching programmes, increasing the understanding of the need to constantly adapt the teaching curriculum to the rapidly changing labour market.

The equipment needed to achieve the teaching goals for vocational education is insufficient. Institutions lack, chiefly, teaching materials, textbooks, reference books and computerised teaching programmes; they mostly have available teaching methodological material, didactical classrooms and aids. Chief recommendations: search for financial resources for vocational education institutions, active participation in project activity and expanding of social partnerships.

8 Conclusion

Evaluation of the various processes of the initial vocational education reform indicated that it virtually lacked consistency, homogeneity and coherence. Unequal results were achieved in different areas of vocational education reform. Key reform principles and priorities were unevenly followed, decision coherence was not ensured on different vocational education and training levels.

The inherited centralised nature of management and its stagnancy and lack of experience with the workings of the market economy, were the major negative factors of vocational education reform which increased internal and external contradictions and determined the success of the solutions to the emerging reform problems.

Curriculum renewal, vocational education network optimisation, involvement of social partners in vocational education planning, management and evaluation, use of international partners and foreign experts, and the implementation of vocational education quality-assurance measures can be called the most successful aspects of initial vocational education reform.

The most problematic aspects of initial vocational education reform were as follows: formation of vocational education strategy and policy, vocational teacher preparation, vocational orientation and counselling, and the improvement of the vocational education image. This of course was aggravated by the inheritance of the previous vocational education system conditions, and, to some extent, the ignoring of these problems on the political level. However, it is necessary to note that many things changed in Lithuania in the reform years.

This was seen with the publication of the vocational education White Papers, preparation of new edition of the Law on Vocational Education, the approval of the vocational teacher/lecturer professional standard, the preparation of vocational orientation and counselling and lifelong learning strategies, etc. The implementation of all these processes of initial vocational education reform was limited by the lack of allocated resources.

The results of the research into vocational education reform in Lithuania are important in scientific, practical and political respects. The results indicate the tendencies and help to confirm hypotheses which can serve further scientific research. The changes in vocational education system and the causes of these changes, determined during the research, can be beneficial in developing further vocational education reform plans and programmes. From the political point of view, the research results form the basis upon which to evaluate the chosen reform strategies and thereupon form new political decisions.

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6. The State of Vocational Teacher Training in Estonia

1 Factors Influencing the Organisation of Vocational Education and Vocational Teacher Training in Estonia

In order to better understand the state and principles of vocational teacher training (VTT) in Estonia, some background knowledge about the Estonian Republic, its people, and its system of education is necessary.

Estonia is a small country with an area of 45,227 km² and a population of 1,356,000 (2003) people. Estonian is the official language of the country. The population increase in Estonia is negative and, in the last 4 years, the difference between births and deaths has fluctuated between 6,000 and 5,000, with deaths outnumbering births. The ageing of the Estonian population is one of the fastest in the world. Conversely, the number of children going to school is decreasing every year and the number of graduates from basic school is approximately half of that of the previous generation (*Kutseõppeasutuste võrgu*, 2003).

68% of the population are ethnic Estonians and 32% non-Estonians (~26% Russians). In the last census there were representatives of 124 nationalities among the residents of Estonia. A large majority of non-Estonians consider Russian their mother tongue. Compared to the 1989 census, the proportion of Estonians has increased from 61.5% to 67.9%. Estonians are in the majority in most of the counties, towns and parishes, but there are also regions (i.e., Ida-Virumaa county) where the proportion of Estonians is only 20% and, for example, in one of the towns of the region Sillamäe, there are only 4% Estonians. The average proportion of Estonians in cities is 57% and in counties 91%. In the capital city of Tallinn, the proportion of Estonians is 54% (*Rahvastiku koosseis*, 2000). The fact that the population speaks different languages makes qualitative delivery of vocational education, as well as vocational teacher, training

complicated. Up to now, vocational teacher training has been carried out in the Estonian language and teachers have also been Estonian by nationality. Since the academic year 2002/03, 43 vocational schools have Estonian as the language of tuition, 18 have both Estonian and Russian as languages of tuition and 18 have only Russian as the language of tuition (*Kutseõppeasutuste arv*, 2004).

According to the 2000 census, 67% of the population of Estonia live in cities and 33% in counties (*Rahvastiku koosseis*, 2000). 37% of the entire Estonian population live in Tallinn.

The majority of the establishments of vocational education are situated in larger towns and settlements, which has given rise to the reorganisation of the network of institutions of vocational education. As part of this process, some of the vocational schools located in rural areas will be closed down, and some will be merged. New, larger ones will be established in cities. Based on the prospective number of students, the planned number of institutions of vocational education in Estonia is 71, which are 13 less than at the moment (presuming that the optimum size of a vocational school is 500 students). Studying at vocational school is not popular in Estonia and this attitude is strongly influenced by public opinion and a trend in the society that overestimates higher education. In 2002, only 28% of basic school graduates, and 19.9% of secondary school graduates continued their education at a vocational school (*Kutseõppeasutuste võrgu*, 2003).

Currently the vague borderline between institutions of applied higher education and vocational education is the source of much confusion. Several institutions of applied higher education are treated as establishments of vocational education, although according to *the International Standard Classification of Education* (ISCED97), they provide the level 3 education (5A). A uniform national attitude does not exist and universities look askance at the higher education provided by institutions of vocational education. The problems listed above are mainly caused by the very different requirements for the teaching staff at vocational schools and universities. When speaking about vocational education and institutions of vocational education, I mean level 2 education—vocational education based on basic education (3B) or secondary education (4B). Another problem of VTT is the limited demand for vocational teachers of certain specialisation. In the academic year 2003/04, the same state-commissioned special areas were taught at various vocational schools (Table 1), but there is no need, or even the possibility, to train a whole group of vocational teachers in the same field of specialisation.

While training vocational teachers, developments within the country have to be considered. More specifically this refers to the reduction in the total number of institutions of vocational education in Estonia, including the closing of four vocational schools that train personnel for prisons.

Table 1 Institutions of vocational education providing training in different fields of specialisation (private vocational schools have not been included)

Fields of specialisation	Number of vocational schools providing training in the field
Transportation	9
Accommodation and catering	18
Domestic services	13
Agriculture and livestock farming	7
Forestry	2
Fishery	3
Horticulture	3
Food processing and industry	8
Textile, sewing	14
Processing materials (wood, paper, plastic)	9
Mechanics and metalwork	9
Motor vehicles, planes, shipping	16
Electronics and energetics	11
Electronics and automatics	17
Construction	16
Computing	11
Wholesale and retail business	10
Audiovisual and other media	2
Music and performing arts	3
Applied art, handicraft	3
Accounting and taxation	4
Secretarial and office work	7
Management and administration	7
Social work and counselling	6
Hairdressing and cosmetology	3
Tourism, travelling	5
Environmental protection	2

Based on statistics of VTT at Tallinn Pedagogical University, the number of vocational teacher–students, in the various areas of specialisation (for the academic year 2003/04), were as follows:

- vocational teachers of catering—five students,
- vocational teachers of sewing—five students,
- vocational teachers of computing—five students,

- vocational teachers of economy and trade—five students,
- instructors of the Armed Forces (vocational teachers)—four students,
- vocational teachers of hairdressing—three students,
- vocational teachers of car service—three students,
- vocational teachers of social services—two students,
- vocational teachers of construction—two students,
- vocational teachers of automatics, electronics—two students,
- vocational teachers of metalwork—one student,
- vocational teachers of cosmetology—one student and
- vocational teachers of other special areas—five students.

This proves that it is impossible to form groups consisting of students studying in one area of specialisation.

The training needed is determined by the number of students studying at vocational schools. In the near future, the number of students will remain stable, but from 2006 it will begin to decrease. Therefore the need for vocational teachers should also decrease, but since the proportion of vocational teachers older than 50 is very high (42%) and that of teachers younger than 30 very low (only 8%), the actual need for vocational teachers should increase. In the academic year 2000/01, the average number of students per teacher was 12. Through reorganisation of the network of vocational schools, the desired 13 students per teacher should be achieved. If this proves to be the case, then the number of posts for vocational teachers should drop to 2,753 by the 2006/07 academic year. In 2000/01, 23% of the teachers working at vocational schools did not meet the requirements established for teachers of vocational schools. Among this group, 3% had only a secondary education and the rest had had a vocational secondary education (*Kutseõppeasutuste õpetajad*, 2004). Today it seems the situation has improved dramatically, since in the years 2000–03 about 40 vocational teachers had acquired vocational pedagogical higher education (120 CP) and 44 others completed VTT (40 CP) on the basis of special higher education at Tallinn Pedagogical University. In 2004, about 70 vocational teachers graduated with vocational pedagogical qualification (120 CP + 40 CP).

It is not popular in Estonia to become a vocational teacher. The main reason is the lower than average salary. A comparison of average salaries has been given in Figure 1. In 2003, the overall average net salary in Estonia was about 5,400 EEK. It should be noted that jobs in the field of education have traditionally earned less than the overall average (*Keskmise bruto*, 2004).

Minimum salaries for teachers have been officially set, but in the majority of cases the minimum has become the norm. After graduation, the gross salary of a junior teacher is 5,350 EEK a month and that is not sufficient motivation for a

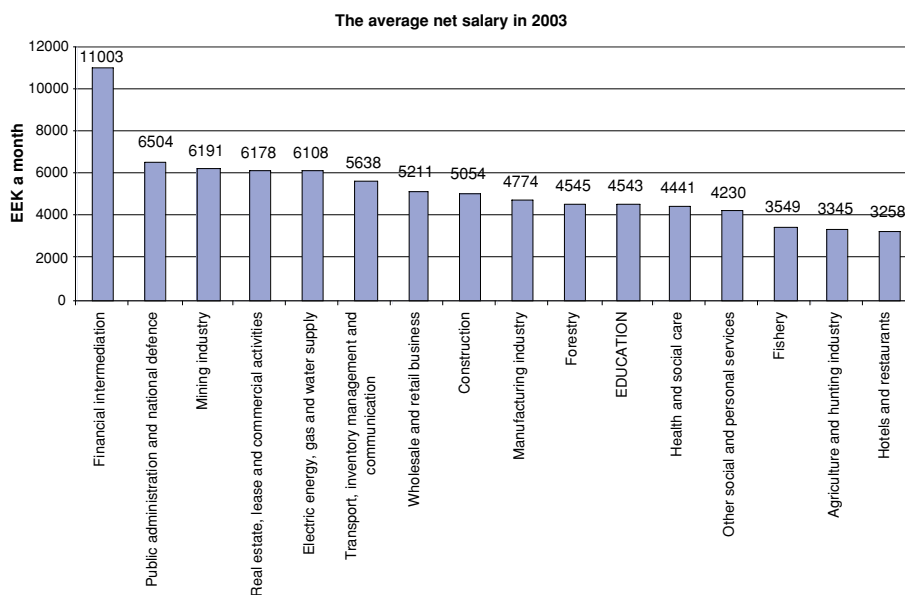


Figure 1 The average net salary in 2003.

person with a higher education. The gross salary of a senior teacher is 6,490 EEK (414.70 EUR) and that of a teacher-educator 7,870 EEK (502.88 EUR) (*Riigi põhikooli*, 2004). Vocational teachers are in particular less motivated. In cities, teachers' salaries are not competitive, whereas in rural areas they are. However, this is not enough to attract new teachers from the cities, because in addition to salary, the infrastructure of the region influences the choice of working place. (*Õpetajakoolituse riiklik*, 2003). People with vocational secondary education are more likely to study to become vocational teachers because this provides them with an opportunity to acquire a higher education in the field of vocational pedagogy. A specialist with higher education lacks motivation to complete a vocational teacher training that offers a considerably lower salary than that of an engineer.

Since there is no dual system of vocational training in Estonia, a vocational teacher has to possess good theoretical knowledge and practical skills. In addition to theoretical lessons, the vocational schools also offer practical training in workshops, training kitchens, etc.

In addition, practical placement in businesses takes place, but the supervisors there are not yet required to pass special pedagogical courses and they are not treated as vocational teachers. It has only been in recent years that the need for pedagogical *in-service* training of the supervisors of practical placement has been discussed. At Tallinn Pedagogical University, an appropriate curriculum

has been developed and the first *in-service* training course has been carried out in the largest wood industry of Estonia, *AS Viisnurk*.

A National Professional Standard for Vocational Teachers has not yet been approved in Estonia, therefore it has not yet been precisely defined what knowledge, skills and character traits a vocational teacher should acquire. While training vocational teachers, the following national regulations are taken into account, which prescribe the form rather than the content:

Framework Requirements for Teacher Training (2001)

Requirements for the Qualification of Teachers (2003)

2 Vocational Teacher Training

Due to the reform in vocational education, more attention is being paid to vocational teachers and their training. At the national level teacher training as a whole is being reorganised:

1. The National Development Plan of Teacher Training 2003–10 has been compiled. In addition to the specialists of the *Ministry of Education and Research*, representatives of the two largest universities active in teacher training, Tallinn Pedagogical University and Tartu University have also been involved in the process of working out the development plan. The development plan presents a new picture of the teacher's role, according to which, in addition to being a mediator of knowledge and skills, a teacher increasingly has to be (*Õpetajakoolituse*, 2003):

- a supervisor and counsellor,
- a student-focussed teacher,
- a developer of learning skills,
- a team member,
- co-operative,
- ethically responsible and
- a teacher as student and researcher.

The National Development Plan specifies teacher's competences, which include: attitudes and values, knowledge, and vocational skills. Relying on these competences, a professional standard for teachers has recently been compiled. In the section 'Teacher Training' in the Development Plan an innovation in VTT has been introduced: the 3 year bachelor curriculum for vocational teacher (120 CP) will be reorganised into a curriculum with elective modules, which, in addition to pedagogical and general educational studies, contains 25% of vocational/speciality-oriented studies and a practical placement. Vocational/speciality-oriented studies take place in respective institutions

of applied higher education or universities, and, if necessary, at institutions of higher education in other countries, depending on the particular needs of a specialisation. It would be desirable, if the state provided students with financial support, to receive complementary vocational training in these foreign establishments.

In certain professional areas (primarily in the fields of engineering and technology), an advisable precondition for commencing studies for teacher training is higher education in the field of specialisation (applied higher education or bachelor studies). The acquisition of working experience may take place concurrently with the studies.

Proceeding from the national development plan, Tallinn Pedagogical University is currently developing a curriculum for vocational pedagogy, for the elective module of the area of specialisation. Negotiations are currently underway for this with the largest university, Tallinn Technical University. There are also plans to renew or establish cooperation with several institutions of applied higher education.

2. In 2003 a teacher's workshop, appointed by the Professional Council of Culture, compiled the Teacher's Professional Standard which is currently being reviewed and should be adopted.

The professional standard is uniform and should involve all teachers. It defines a 'teacher' as the following: 'A teacher is a specialist with a higher education, whose main activity is to guide the student's development and form a favourable learning environment. A teacher's basic skills are planning and managing the learning process, motivating and supervising the student, analysing and assessing the learning process, and giving feedback to the learner and his/her parents/caregivers. The teacher also involves the student in the planning of the curriculum and its objectives, as well as supporting the acquisition of social and learning skills' (Õpetaja III, 2003).

The project of professional standard sets requirements for pursuing the qualification of a vocational teacher are:

- a higher education and successful completion of a vocational year *or*
- a vocational secondary education, 5 years of working experience, with in-service training.

Nevertheless, the yet to be adopted professional standard is somewhat controversial—it defines a teacher as a *specialist with a higher education*, whereas for the qualification of a vocational teacher, a vocational secondary education, working experience and in-service training suffice. The opinion that a vocational teacher does not necessarily have to have a higher education has found wider support but it is also seen to be problematic. On the one hand, there is pressure to subject all teachers to one standard and adopt uniform

requirements for them, but on the other hand, for vocational teachers, for some reason, the requirements for an education are lower. Presumably, after the adoption of the professional standard, the requirements defined there will exert a strong influence on vocational teacher training as well.

The professional standard specifies the following requirements for teachers:

- General knowledge and skills—knowledge about the functioning of a democratic society and the role of the citizen in the society; systematic understanding of the surrounding environment; knowledge about the history and culture of Estonia, Europe and the world; language skills; skills for using information and communication technology; knowledge about records management, first aid and professional ethics.
- Basic knowledge—knowledge about pedagogy and psychology, subject and subject didactics and organisation of education.
- Basic skills—planning and management skills, skills of shaping the learning environment, supervision of learning, motivation, cooperation, communicating, analysing and assessing the development of the student; analysing oneself and one's professional development.
- Special knowledge and skills—this differs, of course, depending on the individual teacher. The special skills and knowledge of a vocational teacher are the command of the vocational field and an area of specialisation. Also necessary are the theory and the ability to execute working operations, defining the content of vocational education, following the trends of the development of the vocational and professional field in the economic and political context, linking the content of training in the area of specialisation with general subjects and associating special knowledge and practical training.
- Personality traits and abilities—responsibility, consistency, initiative, tolerance of stress, emotional self-awareness/stability, co-operativeness/sociability, tolerance, empathy.

3. As of 2004, a vocational year has been introduced for the graduates of teacher training. It is the first working year of a junior teacher after graduation, organised in cooperation with the mentor and the University, at the end of which the teacher has to take a vocational examination in order to be awarded a teacher's qualification.

4. A register of teachers has been introduced, which should contribute to finding out about initial and in-service training needs among teachers. Since 2004, institutions of vocational education are also included in the register. At the moment, there is insufficient information about vocational teachers. It has not been possible to find out the number of teachers in specific fields of specialisation or what their level of education is.

5. Several projects related to VTT have been launched. Currently a large project is being carried out jointly by Tallinn Technical University with Tallinn Pedagogical University, the Tallinn Centre of Vocational Training, the Tallinn College of Engineering, and a private training institution, *Inscope Training*. The content of the project is: A preliminary study for working out the system of *in-service training* for vocational teachers of technology and engineering.

In the process of the project the following has been achieved:

- a study on the existing *in-service training* options for vocational teachers has been carried out,
- a study on the *in-service training* needs of vocational teachers has been carried out,
- a model of competence of vocational teachers of technology and engineering has been developed,
- the experience of *in-service training* of vocational teachers from foreign countries has been studied.

6. In order to harmonise the content of the *in-service training* courses offered, the work group composed by the State Examination and Qualification Centre of the Ministry of Education and Research in the spring of 2003 specified the content of the courses needed to be taken in order to meet the requirements for qualification. This included the content of the course on vocational pedagogy. A 320-hour course for vocational teachers with vocational higher education or vocational secondary education should contain the following topics (*Kutsepedagoogika*, 2003):

- Organisation of vocational education and its legislation.
- Integration of general and vocational education.
- Communication and the working environment.
- Pedagogical psychology.
- Special pedagogy.
- Andragogy.
- Didactics of vocational training.

Traditionally, teacher training has always taken place at universities. In Estonia there are six larger public universities. Measured by the number of students, the largest of them are Tartu University, Tallinn Technical University, and Tallinn Pedagogical University (Figure 2).

Vocational teachers are trained in three universities: Tallinn Pedagogical University, Tartu University and Tallinn Technical University (in cooperation with Tartu University).

At Tartu University, the training of vocational teachers takes place at the bachelor's level (Curriculum of vocational teacher, 120 CP). The preconditions for admission are: a vocational secondary education or a secondary education,

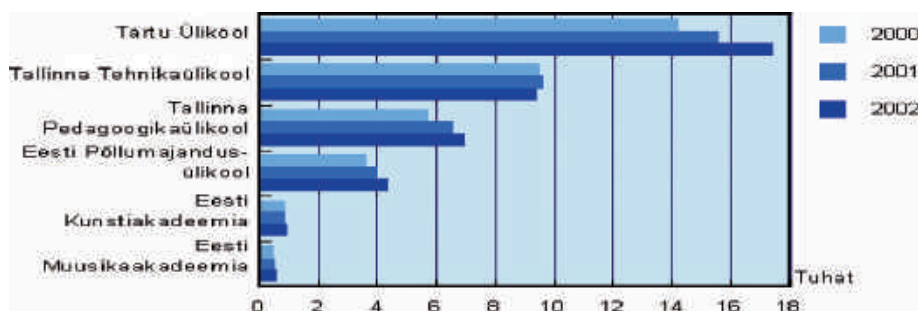


Figure 2 The number of students studying at public universities of Estonia (Thousand) [Tartu University, Tallinn Technical University, Tallinn Pedagogical University/Estonian Agricultural University, Estonian Academy of Arts, Estonian Academy of Music].

and at least 3 years of work experience in the field of specialisation. The fields of study include pedagogical subjects and elective modules in the field of specialisation. The degree awarded at graduation is entitled *Bachelor of Educational Sciences (Vocational Teacher)*.

At Tallinn Technical University, teacher training (Curriculum of technology teacher, 40 CP) takes place on the basis of a higher specialised technological education. Principally, the training offered is that of an engineer-pedagogue. People working, or intending to work, as teachers in the field of technology are admitted into the programme. As there are no pedagogical research personnel at Tallinn Technical University, the curriculum is carried out in cooperation with Tartu University—technological subjects are taught at TTU, while subjects of teacher training at TU. The standard period of study is 1 year. Training is organised in 1–2 day sessions. The graduates are awarded a certificate, the qualification of a teacher of the respective field of specialisation, and an academic report.

Tallinn Pedagogical University is one of the oldest and largest institutes for teacher training in Estonia, as well as being the only centre for research and development of vocational pedagogy at the master's level. The training of vocational teachers takes place at the bachelor's level (Curriculum of vocational pedagogy, 120 CP), the prerequisite for admission to which is vocational secondary education. The curriculum includes 40 CP of teacher training and general subjects of the university, focus subjects of educational sciences, and an option of selecting a minor field (15 CP). On the basis of specialised higher education, teacher training is provided (Curriculum of vocational teacher, 40 CP), which is pedagogical training that takes into account the specific features of vocational schools, and takes 1 year. In addition, it is possible to obtain a master's

degree on the theory and didactics of vocational training (Pedagogy-theory and didactics of vocational training, 80 CP). Master studies include higher-level teacher training, allows people with higher specialised education and higher vocational pedagogical education to be admitted. Tallinn Pedagogical University also organises *in-service training* courses on vocational pedagogy (320 hours), the completion of which gives one the right to work as a vocational teacher.

Due to Estonia's small population, as well as the various languages of tuition at our schools, it is not possible to train specialists separately on subject didactics.

As a result, the principles of general didactics of vocational training have been used in VTT. Until now, no differentiation has taken place in the training of vocational teachers of different areas of specialisation. However, based on the results of my master's thesis, I have proposed certain principles and specific features of training vocational teachers in the area of service provision (Liivik, 2003). These principles and specific features have not yet been applied in practice. Considering the conditions in Estonia, it would be wise to differentiate between vocational teachers in the areas of production and technology, and those in service provision.

In Estonia, the taking into account of any differences or specific features in teacher training has, up to now, been treated with reluctance. Because of the view that a teacher is teacher, whatever he teaches, there have been attempts to train the teachers of kindergarten, basic school, secondary school and vocational teachers all together. In recent years, however, it has been possible to put more emphasis on the specific area of vocational training at Tallinn Pedagogical University in addition to increasing the number of subjects related to vocational training. Improving the curricula is a current project at the Tallinn Pedagogical University. Individual specialised training will be increased and practical placement in the area of specialisation will be included in the curriculum.

The principles and options of VTT in Estonia have been given below in Figure 3.

Figure 3 demonstrates various ways of becoming a vocational teacher:

1. The bold green lines indicate the path towards *vocational teacher* on the basis of a vocational secondary education, which has always been promoted and applied by Tallinn Pedagogical University.

A skilled worker acquires higher vocational pedagogical education (120 CP) within 3 years, taking general subjects of the university, pedagogical subjects, teacher training subjects, as well as individual subjects in the area of specialisation (in cooperation with other establishments of higher education if needed—indicated by green broken line).

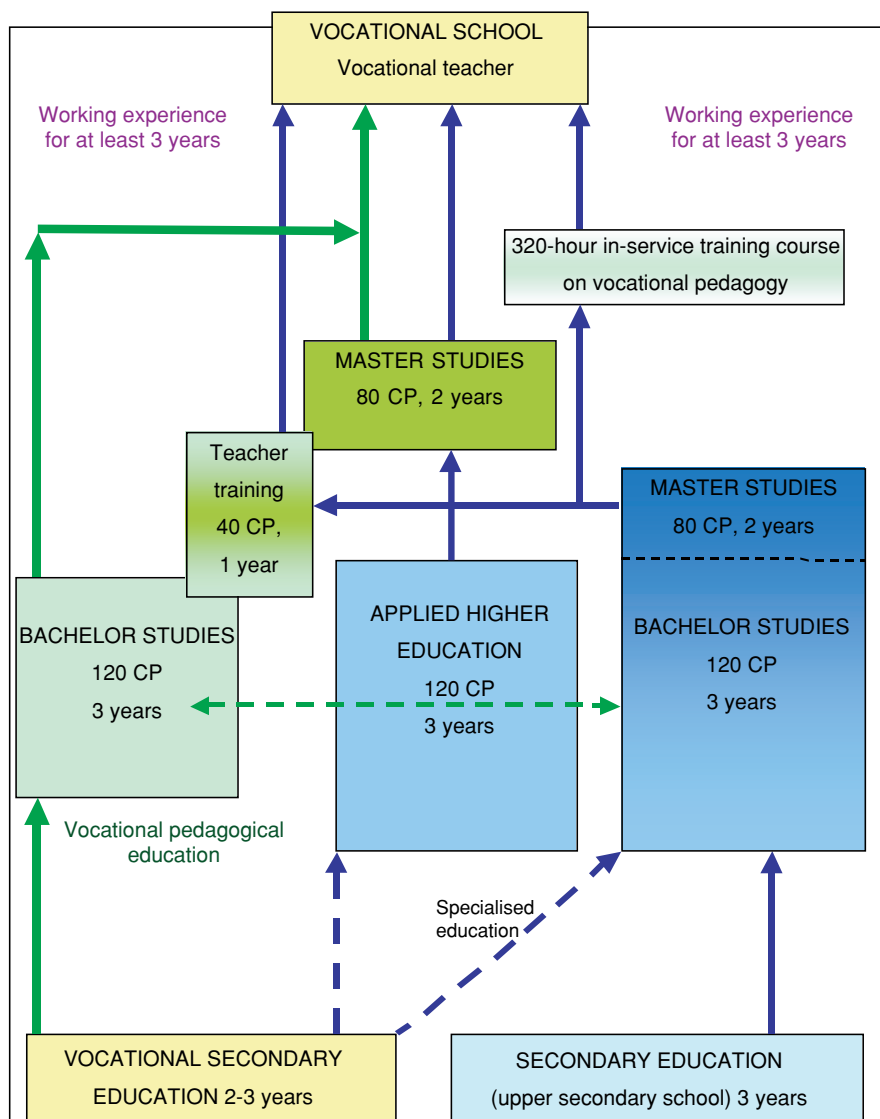


Figure 3 The options of becoming a vocational teacher.

After having acquired higher vocational pedagogical education, a person can work as a vocational teacher (an addition requirement is to have 3 years of work experience in the area of specialisation). They also have the option to continue the study course according to the master's programme on the didactics of vocational training, after the completion of which one

can work as a vocational teacher with a master's degree in the didactics of vocational training.

2. The second option is, after having acquired vocational secondary education, to continue studies in applied higher education or academic higher education (blue broken lines). This can be followed by a vocational teacher training (40 CP), master studies on the didactics of vocational training, or by completing the minimum 320-hour course of vocational pedagogy required to work as a vocational teacher. This has been marked by broken lines because generally the graduates from vocational schools are not capable of competing with the graduates from upper secondary schools for university places.
3. The third option of becoming a vocational teacher is to enter university after graduation from upper secondary school (blue bold lines), to acquire higher education in the area of specialisation, and afterwards continue with 40 CP VTT master studies on the didactics of vocational training, or complete the minimum 320-hour course of vocational pedagogy. In Estonia, the weakness of this version is the overly 'academic nature' of higher education, which does not give a vocational teacher sufficient preparation for teaching a skilled worker. It may not be compensated by 3 years of practical work experience, since university students or graduates do not usually work as skilled workers, but occupy the posts of officials or foremen in their field of specialisation. In addition, there is the problem, already mentioned above; that the difference in the salaries of engineers and vocational teachers do not motivate university graduates to work as vocational teachers.

In essence, each form of training has its own advantages and disadvantages and the training of a good vocational teacher depends a lot on the 'raw material', i.e., on the person studying to become a vocational teacher. Estonia can definitely learn from other smaller foreign countries that have a long tradition of vocational teacher training and whose features and conditions resemble those of Estonia.

It is more difficult to import good ideas from large countries, since opportunities and conditions are so different (for example, the size of the population, the number of vocational schools and the need for vocational teachers will never be the same).

In joining the European Union, there are various grants available, which could influence the development of vocational education and vocational teacher training in Estonia. Let us hope that the results of various projects on vocational education do not remain on paper only, but will soon be applied in practice.

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7. Reform of VET Teacher Training in Latvia

During the last decade, Latvia has experienced substantial changes in its VET sector in order to adapt to European *Union* standards. Until the late 1990s, there had been no standardised concept concerning VET teacher training in Latvia.

Traditionally, teachers at vocational schools had:

- (a) graduated from a pedagogical college or university. Therefore they taught subjects of general education, mostly without any consideration of a vocational school's specific profile.
- (b) completed a specialised training program at a university of applied sciences or a university. They taught professional subjects of the relevant professional profile (i.e., pedagogical training was no prerequisite).
- (c) obtained vocational qualification, acquired job experience, and were then certified to teach at a vocational colleague.

The Law on Vocational Education (1999), with revisions (2000), aims at providing the necessary qualifications for the training of teachers at vocational schools. (This includes additional pedagogical training at a university, or at least 320 lessons at a pedagogical further education course.)

According to the Law on Education and the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations (CMR), which come into force on 3 October 2000, teachers without pedagogical training and the relevant qualifications were not to be allowed to teach at vocational schools, as of 1 January 2004. This came about because only 67% of teachers at vocational schools were pedagogically qualified in the academic year 2002/03.

Actually, the new requirements for teaching at vocational educational establishments were already made known back in 1999. This gave teachers 5 years to fill in any gaps in their academic background, if so desired. The regulations at that time allowed a foreman to work as a VET teacher without an academic degree, although they were required to have pedagogical training.

This allowed them to teach at a vocational school or upper vocational school. This changed however in 2003, when a graduate diploma from a university of applied sciences became the minimum qualification for *anyone* teaching at vocational schools.

At this point, a historical review is necessary. At the beginning of the transformation of the former Soviet-model education system to the European Union standards in the early 1990s, it was not taken into account that there was a major difference between a *vocational school* (*arodskola*), an *upper vocational school* (*profesionāla vidusskola*), and the so-called '*Technicum*' (*tehnikums*). With its educational content, the '*Technicum*' was similar to a '*Berufskolleg*', which is one level higher than an *upper vocational school*.

In Latvia neither a special training for instructors nor a regulation on training are required for trainers and instructors.

The apprenticeship training is carried out by professional teachers (*arodskolotājs*) at the schools but the qualifying work experience training of 960 lessons takes place under the guidance of an experienced foreman (without pedagogical qualification) in the companies. Most of the teachers at vocational educational establishments had completed the '*Technicum*' in the 1980s or even earlier, have taken part in further education courses in order to acquire the background knowledge in pedagogics. As of the academic year 2004/05, they will not longer be allowed to teach at a vocational school due to the lack of a higher education diploma. This claim would be justified if the situation at Latvia's vocational educational establishments was different.

Latvia is facing a devastating lack of junior staff, a major part of VET teachers has already reached the age of retirement, and it is hard to expect that an engineer will take up pedagogical training in order to earn five times less than he could in the private sector.

Despite the long history of this problem, which has been discussed at all different levels, the future appears rather pessimistic. Since 2000, five institutions of higher education have offered vocational teacher training programmes.

The Institute for Humanities at Riga Technical University offers a programme in this area. The admission requirement is a university entrance qualification in a specific field of interest. The program lasts 2 years (in which 82 credit points are awarded). The programme at Liepāja Pedagogical College is also 2 years (with 80 credit points) after 1 year of studying at Liepāja Pedagogical College, a certificate is awarded which entitles one to teach vocational subjects.

Vocational teacher training programmes are offered as fulltime and part-time programmes. Part-time programmes are the most popular choice. However, the demand to qualify VET teacher in Latvia is enormous.

In Latvia there is a broad network of vocational educational establishments that cover all regions of the country. Until 1 July 2004, responsibilities for

vocational schools were dispersed among five different ministries. Since 1 July, all responsibility has been consolidated into the Ministry of Education and Science. A certain transition period has to be allowed for until specific questions have been answered, and the problems of finance/support educational institutes have been solved. The shutting-down of some smaller vocational schools is now being discussed. For many young people it unfortunately means the end of educational opportunities after high school—secondary schools focus on a special educational level and vocational schools are located too far away from many students place of residence (most students of vocational schools come from families with a low income).

Where do vocational educational establishments see their opportunities? It is the training's quality in the first place, depending on an appropriate capacity of teaching staff and modern technical equipment. We opt for a consistent policy for the VET sector that takes the country's real situation into consideration. We expect our officials to make use of the experiences of the Western-European educational systems, in the hope of avoiding the errors of the past. The contact with employers/private businesses should be intensified so that students of vocational schools do not automatically face unemployment after having completed their training.

Our hope lies in the universities to offer serious courses for VET teaching staff, especially in the technical professions. The teacher should be qualified to teach in a general and a professional subject after graduation. For most teachers, the didactics of technical subjects are still a foreign entity.

Most of all, we, the schools and the Ministry, shall put an effort into changing the low reputation of vocation schools in the society at large. The vocational school should not always be the last one to receive financial support from the national budget, and a VET teacher should earn enough to support a family (one has to keep in mind that most teachers of technical subjects are male). Only then can the profession of VET teacher gain some sort of attractiveness.

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8. Development of a Vocational Teacher Education Strategy in Lithuania: Challenges, Reality and Solutions

1 Introduction

Lithuania, as a country in transition, is undergoing ‘double-time changes’ in politics, economics and social life relating to the changes that replaced the centralised economy by the market economy. This has been paralleled by the continuous progress of science and technology that has resulted in permanent changes in labour market needs for vocational qualifications. These ‘double-time changes’ create a sophisticated and ‘turbulent’ effect which is very complicated to manage. It also presents a new set of challenges for the entire Lithuanian VET system, as well as vocational teacher education. The systematic research on Lithuanian VET teacher education improvement has become very important. The answers to the questions ‘what is a good VET teacher?’ and ‘what makes a VET teacher a good one?’ also becomes very important. Research data on the current situation of Lithuanian VET teacher professional qualification show the great demand for acquiring pedagogical qualification.¹

Therefore, this article provides a discussion on the following issues: current situation of didactical, as well as vocational, qualification of Lithuanian

¹ Pedagogical qualification in this article is understood as an interrelated and integrated summary of vocational (occupational or professional content knowledge, skills and attitudes) and didactical (knowledge’s, skills and attitudes—teaching/learning theories, objectives, methods and means, adjusted to the nature of vocational occupation or profession) qualifications. Each of them (vocational and didactical qualifications) consists of appropriate set of vocational and didactical competencies (not competences).

vocational teachers and lecturers,² the competency based professional standard of vocational teachers and its design based on the lifelong learning (career path) paradigm, new challenges for vocational teacher education in lifelong learning paradigm, new role of VET school in competency based VET teacher education, new quality of interaction between teacher training institution and VET school in initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers, main approaches, principles and parameters of the new Lithuanian VET teacher education strategy focussed on implementation of developed VET teacher's professional standard and teacher education standard which is based on a modular approach.

This article does not include that part of the national strategy of VET teacher education and training in Lithuania, focussed on development of prior learning assessment methodology and assessment tools to measure acquired didactical competencies in prior teaching/learning practice as well as recognition (accreditation) of VET teacher education programmer on the European level which are now under development.

2 New Challenges for VET Teachers and VET Schools: The Lifelong Learning Paradigm

The EU *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000) made clear the importance of education. As a driving force of human resource development in a long-term paradigm, which could make Europe more competitive in the world. In addition to that, OECDs 'PISA' (Programme for International Student Assessment) study (Buck, 2002) made a big impact by confronting politicians with further problems in education development. Not taken into account was the shift of the educational paradigm that could be summarised with two words—'lifelong learning' (LLL). It began already in such countries as Canada and New Zealand, and was highly rated by PISA due to the initial positive results. The shift to a lifelong learning paradigm also concerns the very important aspect of the vocational education system which is vocational teacher education: it insists on the change in the role of vocational teacher in VET school, as well as the role of VET school in competency based VET teachers' education and training. What do these role changes mean and who is to be challenged in the reality of initial and continuing VET teacher education?

² Previous VET high schools with the main personnel of VET lectures under the nowadays progress of VET reform are converting to VET schools (VET lectures are becoming VET teachers) or VET colleges that are already attributed to the non-university higher education sector.

A new role of the VET teacher, first off all? is related to a change of stereotypes of *pedagogical behaviour* of VET teachers turning from a '*teacher centred*' to a '*student centred*' approach. Following this change in approach, vocational teachers very often manifest themselves as teaching/learning programme designers and developers, coaches and assistants, members of school activity development teams, consultants of learning and vocational career, facilitators and developers of learning, participants of international cooperation and communication networks, etc.

Nevertheless, many teachers still do like to *teach*, but do not necessarily like to *learn*. Therefore, VET teachers at all levels have to understand the meaning of LLL, then follow the LLL approach in their daily work and their own personal development.

The LLL paradigm concerns not only a single VET teacher, but a *whole VET school* as a specific organisation which is very strongly linked with labour market demands via permanently changing structure of qualifications and a composition of the competencies of each concrete occupational or professional qualification. It means that each VET school is a part of the educational market. Therefore, in order to survive in this market, VET schools have to turn into *learning organisations*. A clear understanding of the local, national and international *mission* of VET schools, the 'know-how' in designing a VET school *vision*, as well as building up a school's staff *development plans* with the implementation of *quality management system*—that is a new role of VET schools in VET teacher education. The main *external features* of a learning organisation could be the following: openness to the environment, openness to innovations, active participation in the processes of change and orientation in changes in the environment. The main *internal features* of a *learning organisation* are: the developmental strategy of organisation, participation of VET school community developing vision of school under the basis of perceived *mission*, obtaining information and its dissemination in all directions, accountability of advantages and disadvantages, domination of partnership principles among departments of school, flexibility of principles for promotion, wide range of opportunities to act individually and in teams, emphasis on outside relations, self-development of members of organisation, positive psychological climate in organisation, etc.

VET school is a very important partner of a vocational teacher education institution (i.e., university or college, providing vocational teacher with didactical qualification) and enterprises (i.e., providing vocational teacher with the most advanced, strategically orientated vocational competencies) in competency based VET teacher education, focussed on acquisition of advanced practical teaching skills. The process of *integration of a future working place* with vocational teacher education and training includes not only *tutor's supervision*

at university or college, but also *working guidance activity* (Peter and Meta, 2000) *for mentors* (experienced VET teacher with special competencies).

Competency based vocational teacher education and training claims for a new approach in *curriculum design* as well—from curriculum built up on the *separate vocational subjects* to curriculum built up on the *integrated modules* where each module is orientated to acquisition of specific competency or set of competencies.

Such a modular approach in initial and continuing professional development of vocational teacher education and training would allow flexibility in responding to the individual needs of teacher–students (using prior learning assessment—PLA—methodology) and changes in the labour market.

The modular approach in VET teacher education and training enables the integration of theory and practice, to bring about better interaction among teacher training institutions, VET schools and social partners. It sets up the necessary preconditions for developing personal and institutional VET teacher education and training *networks* on the local, national and international levels. It is obvious, that nowadays the vocational teacher functions as a *net-worker* across school boundaries (Pukelis, Lauzackas and Rogojinaru, 1999), and that this is the future role of the vocational teacher in VET schools. Hence, the VET teacher is becoming a *reflective practitioner*, or even a *researching practitioner*, since anticipation of changes in the labour market, prognosis of emerging of new qualifications, and a permanently changing market all demand that the VET teacher possess appropriate research competencies. It could be achieved by bringing VET schools and universities (or other higher educational institution) closer together in vocational teacher education (Fullan, 1993). Development of VET teacher research competencies is also a positive influence on the VET school's capacity to jump-start innovation, as well as continuing the professional development of vocational teachers.

3 The Current State of Lithuanian Vocational Pedagogues Professional Qualification

Research has been carried out involving all vocational pedagogues (VET teachers and lecturers) of Lithuania. The majority of them are working in the systems of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Labor Market Training Centers of Ministry of Social Security and Labor of Lithuania. The formal statistical data was collected taking into account the different categories of vocational pedagogues and following these criteria:

1. Vocational education level of vocational teachers and lecturers;
2. Didactical education level of vocational teachers and lecturers;
3. General data (age, working experience in a vocational field, pedagogical experience) of vocational teachers and lecturers.

All these parameters are significant in forming a picture of Lithuanian vocational pedagogues and pointing out their main initial and continuing professional development needs.

In the research, the collected data included information on 4,777 vocational pedagogues of Lithuania. Among them were 2,615 vocational teachers (those at secondary vocational schools), 1,673 vocational lecturers (those at high VET schools being currently converted to VET colleges or VET schools) and 489 vocational teachers working in the labour market training centres.

This data has allowed researchers to 'paint a picture' of the present status of Lithuanian vocational teachers in vocational schools, colleges, and in labour market training centres. The results of the statistical research are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The average age of vocational teachers and lecturers (Table 1) in Lithuania ranges from 31 to 50 years old (56.32%). The majority of vocational pedagogues (62.34%) are certified specialists in their vocational field (Table 2). On the other hand, 76.2% of vocational pedagogues *do not actually have a formal didactical background* (Figure 1), but approximately 70% (18.2% + 54.9%) have pedagogical work experience exceeding 10 years.

The conclusion could be drawn (Figure 1) that acquisition of didactical qualification is the most urgent need of vocational pedagogues of Lithuania.

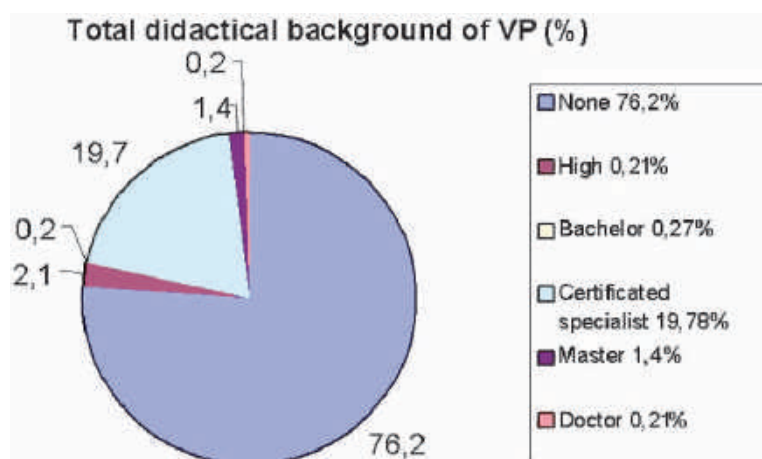


Figure 1 Formal Level of Didactical Education of Vocational Pedagogues of Lithuania (%).

Table 2 Basic formal statistical data on vocational and didactical education of vocational pedagogues of Lithuania

No.	Category of vocational pedagogue	Total	Vocational education level					Didactical education level							
			Without sec. (%)	Secondary (%)	High (%)	Bachelor (%)	Certificated special (%)	Master (%)	Doctor (%)	None (%)	High (%)	Bachelor (%)	Certificated special (%)	Master (%)	Doctor (%)
1	Vocational teachers	2,615	0	9.2	42.6	0.4	46.2	1.5	0.07	87.6	2.9	0.2	8.3	0.96	0
2	Vocational lecturers	1,673	0	0.18	5.98	1.5	87.98	2.9	1.5	57.6	1.5	0.5	37.96	2.1	0.36
3	Vocational teachers of LM	489	0	14.5	20.3	0.8	61.1	1.8	1.4	78.3	0.6	0	18.8	1.4	0.8
4	Total	4,777	0	6.6	27.5	0.82	62.34	2.0	0.7	76.2	2.18	0.27	19.78	1.4	0.2

On the other hand, about 70% of vocational pedagogues of Lithuania have more than 10 years pedagogical work experience in VET schools, colleges or labour market training centres. Taking this into account, we could anticipate that a significant part of vocational pedagogues already have some didactical competencies, which compose pedagogical qualification of vocational pedagogue. That means, acquisition of didactical qualification of vocational pedagogues could be organised in two ways: first, via initial pedagogical training courses and second, via assessment of prior learning achievements of vocational pedagogues. The second alternative could save the state (the employer) time and money as well as vocational pedagogues. The contemporary situation of vocational pedagogue's qualification in Lithuania shows, first of all, the main attention to acquisition of didactical qualification. Such real situations make the impact on the development of Lithuanian vocational pedagogue's education and training conception.

4 The Main Actors in Vocational Teachers Education and Training

Pedagogical (didactical and vocational) education, and the training of vocational teachers, is taking place in universities (or other higher pedagogical or vocational educational institutions). In universities, *theoretical pedagogical studies* are mainly organised to offer a vocational teacher–student the opportunity to acquire systemised theoretical pedagogical knowledge, and a background of *pedagogical thinking* for educational problem-solving. Vocational schools or colleges provide *practical pedagogical studies* in a real pedagogical setting in order to develop the practical teaching/learning skills of a vocational teacher. During the theoretical and practical studies, the future teacher faces the various problems of an educational organisation. They are not able to solve all of them independently as pedagogical experience is insufficient.

Therefore, the support of other participants in the vocational teacher education and training process becomes of utmost importance in developing their efficiency in pedagogical studies.

The main actors in vocational teacher education and training are universities or other higher education schools (for example—VET colleges), as well as *lecturers, tutors* and VET school *mentors and future vocational teachers*, who already work in VET schools. Table 3 illustrates all vocational teacher education and training participants, their activities, and activity content.

Functions of a *lecturer* in a university of other higher schools are limited to *participation* in the VET programme; realising theoretical study aims (conveying pedagogical knowledge, development of pedagogically valuable approaches

Table 3 The main actors in vocational teacher didactical education and training

Participants	Activity	Activity content
Lecturers	Theoretical pedagogical education of vocational teachers	Analyses of lectures, seminars, teaching/learning skills practicum's, designing of subject (module) content, organising the independent work of vocational teacher students, planning of study process, teaching of subject, assessing and evaluation of achieved study results, evaluation of teaching subject (module) content, lecturing, improvement of study content and methods.
Tutors	Participation in designing the modular programmes for vocational teacher education and training, vocational teacher theoretical pedagogical education and supervision of practical realisation of theoretical study objectives by distance coaching	Act as lecturers, take part in designing and planning of vocational teacher pedagogical education and training programmes, observe the future vocational teacher theoretical and practical activities, participate in discussions with future VET teachers and mentors, encourage future vocational teachers by providing advice and consultations, maintain their study motivation, evaluate achievement, provide feedback by distance coaching, evaluate vocational teacher education and training programmes with regard to responses from programme participants.

(continued)

Table 3 *Continued*

Participants	Activity	Activity content
Vocational teacher students	Theoretical and practical pedagogical studies	Study theoretical subjects or modules, perform direct teaching practice in vocational school or college, observe teaching/learning process and its elements, participate in discussions with lecturers, tutors, mentors and colleagues, plan teaching/learning activities, reflect their own and colleagues' teaching activities, reflectively evaluate feedback received from tutor, mentor, colleagues, learners, their parents and social partners.
Mentors	Working guidance assisting vocational teacher student to acquire practical pedagogical skills by direct coaching	Meeting of future vocational teachers carrying out practical pedagogical training, discuss strategy of pedagogical practice by working guidance, together formulate the main aims and objectives of pedagogical practice, develop pedagogical practice and working guidance plans, guide pedagogical practice, coach, observe vocational teacher student activity in the classroom, school, enterprises and meetings with parents, assess achievements, interpret them and provide feedback, assist in solving various pedagogical problems, foster and maintain pedagogical activity motivation by direct coaching, support VET teacher student becoming a member of VET school community and understanding its' organisational culture.

and attitudes, theoretical pedagogical thinking elements, etc.) during lectures, seminars and other activities.

A *tutor's* (Great Britain) or a *university supervisor's* (USA and other countries) functions are also performed by university/higher school *lecturers*. However, in contrast to university lecturers, they have concrete didactical and managerial responsibilities with regard to vocational teacher education and training programs. For instance a *tutor* performs a lecturer's functions and also participates in designing, planning and evaluating the programs. They also examine practical studies guided by mentors in accordance with vocational teacher education and training programme objectives (Evelein, 2000; Truus, 2000). Therefore, practical pedagogical studies are a cooperative effort between vocational schools and universities/higher schools.

A *mentor* (associated teacher, clinical instructor, cooperative teacher) ordinarily is an experienced vocational teacher (*Mentor Training in Vocational Training*, 1998), who helps future VET teachers during their internship to 'convert' theoretical knowledge into practical teaching/learning skills, to better understand the peculiarities of VET professional teacher activity, and to assist them to more smoothly 'grow into' a school's organisational culture. Their chief function, in dealing with a future vocational teacher or lecturer pedagogical practice, is *working guidance* (Peter and Meta, 2000). The mentor has to be a strong personality, to believe in the significance of pedagogical work, to comply with pedagogical ethics requirements, as well as being creative, tolerant and emphatic, etc.

They have to be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by information-technology, as well as being able to handle a multitude of tasks: develop teaching/learning content, prepare teaching/learning materials, participate in project work (plan, implement, evaluate, adjust), organise team work, apply active teaching/learning methods and various coaching methods, prepare meetings for a future VET teachers', create an agreement for cooperation, be able to communicate and interpret, provide feedback, advise, know how to carry out acts of pedagogical intervention, investigate needs, observe, develop discussion skills in researching and identifying practical situations and finding optimal solutions, apply various pedagogical situations to make VET teacher education and training more effective.

During practical studies, interaction usually takes place between a '*tutor*' (who inspects or carries out the function of supervision), a '*mentor*' (who guides the practical activity of the future vocational teacher), a *vocational teacher student* (who performs practical pedagogical tasks), and, a participant who has yet to be mentioned,—a *student* at the vocational training institution.

The nature of this interaction is determined by practical pedagogical study aims and objectives. Effectiveness depends on the competence and motivation

of the participants. As the research indicates, the majority of problems arise owing to the most important agent of the practical pedagogical studies—the *mentor*. The problems can be caused by many factors, i.e., competence, interest and motivation, pedagogical approach and attitudes, experience, financial issues, etc. According to Christensen (1988), who investigated the interaction between future teachers, tutors and mentors, the communication between future teachers and ‘tutors’ is partnership like, of equal value, evaluative approach prevails in commenting upon lessons and other pedagogical tasks: pedagogical errors and difficulties are analysed, conclusions drawn, strategy and tactics of pedagogical practice are formulated, independent thinking is fostered and problem-solving solutions are foreseen.

The interaction between future teachers and mentors is of a *different nature*. The mentor guides the discussion, discussions are limited to review of events and student learning activity, directive conclusions prevail and future vocational teachers are appointed tasks for future activity, usually without any justification why they should perform them.

Ben-Peretz and Rumney (1991) note that in Israel, interaction between future teachers and mentors are usually of an evaluative nature. Future teachers are rarely, if ever, provided with suggestions or alternatives to their activity.

Koerner (1992) researched the causes of the communication shortcomings between future teachers and mentors. It was discovered that mentors, i.e., experienced teachers, feel irritated because future teachers disturb their usual working routine, cause them to waste their time, and hinder their concentration with their own work. Experienced teachers are bothered that future teachers ‘bring’ various ideas from a university or other higher educational institution to a school, ideas that purportedly do not correspond to real life. They also complain of stereotyping and contradictions. Consequently, an adequate choice of experienced teachers to carry out the mentor functions, as well as the proper mentor preparation, has become a very important factor in vocational teacher training, based on the acquisition of practical pedagogical competencies.

Leavitt (1991) states that contradictions between tutors and mentors arise due to a different understanding of practical pedagogical study-aims between theoreticians at universities, and practitioners at schools. Therefore the tutors and mentor’s pedagogical communication and cooperation are an important factor in practical pedagogical study development.

One of the most important tutor–mentor methods of cooperation is training experienced teachers to perform mentor functions and the managing of their further communication in the process of vocational teacher education. Such a mentor-training program is already in operation and is supported by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science.

5 Types of VET Schools Regarding Readiness for Change

Regarding readiness of VET schools to change could be distinguished three types of VET schools as organisations:

- VET schools which *wonder* when something happens;
- VET schools which *observe* how and what is happening;
- VET schools, which *achieve* that something is progressing.

VET schools could also be characterised as being either (Hopkinson, Ainscow and West, 1994) *effective* or *ineffective* (Figure 2).

The main factors stimulating the organisational changes of VET schools in the transition countries are as follows:

- To survive in educational market;
- To grow up and to develop;
- To satisfy requirements of consumers;
- To raise the quality of initial and continuous training of VET teachers;
- To accelerate inner changes in VET school with regard to external changes;
- To rectify the failures of previous changes;
- To improve the image of VET school and others factors.

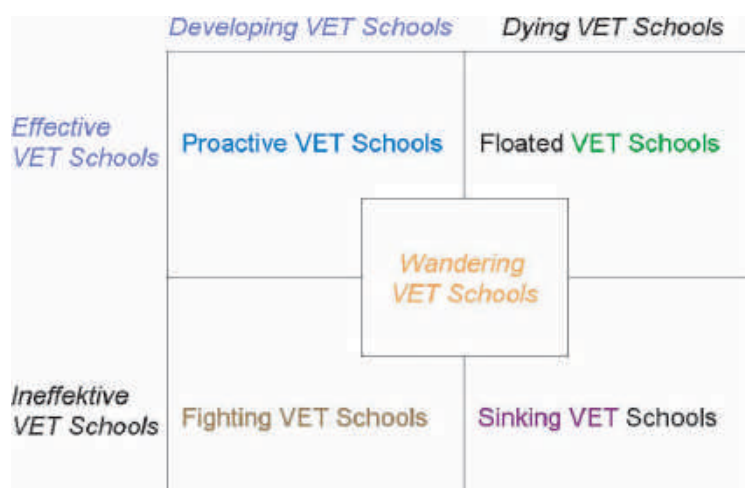


Figure 2 Typology of Effective and Ineffective VET Schools (according Hopkinson, Ainscow and West, 1994).

The main law of survival of the VET school as an organisation could be expressed in such a formula: $L > C$, where L —speed of learning in organisation and C —speed of environmental change.

The main trends of organisational development in VET schools could be described as follows:

- Professional development of VET teachers;
- Development of teaching and learning quality;
- Development of relations with the labour market;
- Marketing or development of schools as organisation.

The main problems to be solved by VET schools in ‘double speed’ changing society are the following:

- What are labour market needs?
- How does one discover labour market needs?
- What changes must a VET school undergo in order to survive in the educational market?
- How are changes implemented in a VET school?

6 Practical Experience of Organisational Development within VET School in Lithuania

In order to solve the above mentioned problems in Lithuania, a 3-year joint-project of European Training Foundation (ETF), Denmark, and Finland called the *Reshaping the Focus and Structure of VET Teacher/Trainer Training in Latvia and Lithuania* (1999–2002) was designed. The organisational development of VET schools was based on such approaches as:

- *Opening of VET schools to the labour market.* Emphasising close cooperation with social partners and building up national and international networks among all institutions and key actors involved in vocational teachers education;
- *Action reflection learning implemented.* Via modernisation of teaching/learning methods and orientated to enhance independent student activity;
- Organisational development within VET school. Turning from a ‘vertical’ to a ‘horizontal’ organisational structure in order to become a *learning organisation* and an *equal partner of university* in VET teachers’ education and training;
- *Close interaction* of universities (or higher pedagogical school) and VET schools to strengthen the practical pedagogical studies of vocational teacher students. Previous VET teachers’ education was too academic.

Opening of VET schools to the labour market was realised via:

- A. Involving the representatives of companies in the activities of VET schools.
- B. Identification of areas of co-operation between VET schools and businesses.
- C. Identification of specific criteria of schools and companies in order to achieve continuing co-operation with enterprises.

Organisational development within VET schools was achieved via:

- D. Identification of the main trends in society and the labour market.
- E. Identification of the current development in the assumption of VET school as an organisation and of teaching and learning.
- F. The designing of a vision of VET schools under its' perceived mission in a changing society.
- G. Organising of change agent teams (CAT) in VET schools.

Modernisation of teaching/learning methods in VET schools was accomplished via:

- H. Improved knowledge and skills of various teaching and learning methods.
- I. Introduction and practice of action reflection learning.
- J. Introduction of new tools to assess the knowledge and performance of students.

Main principles of composition of change agent teams (CAT) are the following (Figure 3):

- Head or deputy director of VET school (covering the 'space beyond the school').
- Experienced teacher in classroom field (covering the 'classroom space').
- Experienced teacher in VET school organisational development field (covering the 'VET school space').
- Support from university by a tutor (CAT or 'practice' need educational support from 'theory' or local universities).

7 Strategy of Vocational Teachers Education and Training in Lithuania

The national strategy of the pedagogical education and training of Lithuanian vocational teachers was developed on the basis of such approaches as:

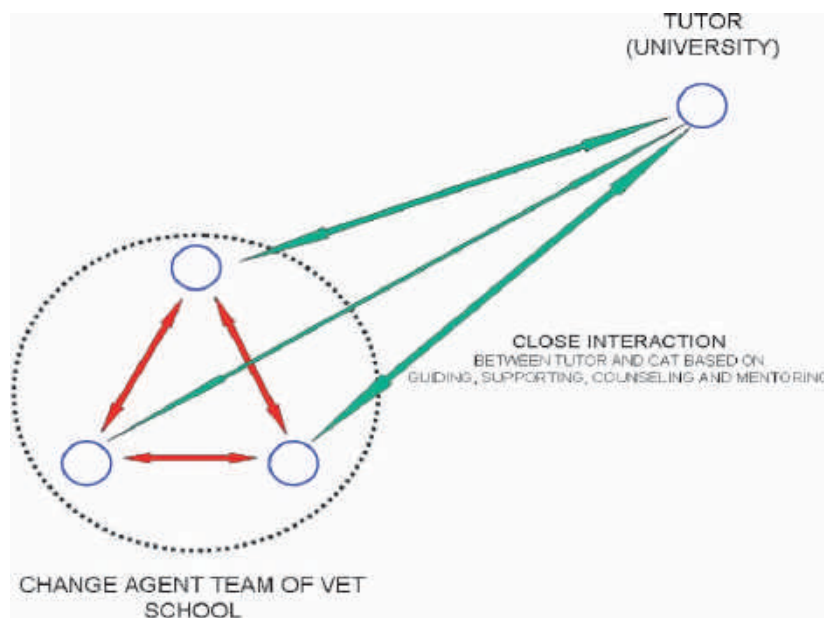


Figure 3 Composition of VET School CAT with Tutor's Support from University Side.

- Integration of *theoretical and practical studies* at the vocational teacher's place of work (work and learning integration at work place) or *close interaction* between universities (or higher school) and VET schools. Previous VET teachers' education was too academic.
- Turning the VET school into a *learning organisation* to alter the organisational development from a 'vertical' to a 'horizontal' organisational structure. Converting VET schools to being *equal partners with universities* in vocational teachers' education and training.
- Implementing *action reflection learning* via modernisation of teaching/learning methods to enhance student's independent learning activity.
- *Opening of VET schools to the labour market* by emphasising close cooperation with social partners and by building up national and international networks among all institutions and key actors involved in vocational teacher's education.

The principles of VET teacher education and training are formulated according to the peculiarities of political, economic, social, cultural, as well as curriculum, organisational and personal factors and the possibilities of their interaction. VET teachers' education and training in Lithuania adhere to the following principles:

- *Decentralisation*, meaning that all teachers have access to education and training in regard to the development of pedagogical qualifications, regional choice, and other aspects, possibilities for formal, non-formal and informal learning, involvement of broad range of vocational institutions;
- *Openness*, which means coordination of individual and labour market needs, learning accessibility, coherence of initial and in-service training, qualification demand and supply on national and international levels, interests of social partners and other social groups, financial and other resources, general, academic and vocational education.
- *Systematisation*, meaning that the system of VET teachers' education and training guarantees the conditions for lifelong learning and gradual acquisition of the qualification categories as well as possibilities for professional development.
- *Compatibility*, meaning that the system of VET teachers' education and training is constantly renewed and changed to satisfy the demands of the labour market, the educational system, and separate teachers continuing professional development needs, when they choose a VET teacher's profession.
- *Cooperation* emphasises the estimation of the demands of different interest groups in VET teachers planning and organising of their continuing professional development. Cooperation assures vertical and horizontal links among different institutions of VET teachers' education and training as well as relations with the social partners, schools, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and partners for international projects.
- *Particularity*, which highlights the singularity of VET teachers' education and training principles, and organisation and content in comparison with other types of teacher education. A great variety of VET programmers and demand for a small number of VET teachers (in Lithuania's case) in different vocational subject fields are also given consideration. General regularities and national peculiarity are considered in the international context.

The *main parameters* of vocational teachers' education and training are:

- Professional standards for VET teachers.
- Consecutive model for VET teacher education and training.
- Curriculum of initial and continuing pedagogical development of VET teacher based on professional standards for VET teachers.

The professional standard for VET teacher was developed, as mentioned above, on the basis of lifelong learning paradigm. That means that the professional standard of VET teacher's profession covers the whole 'horizontal' career

path of a VET teacher that encompasses five qualification categories: *junior vocational teacher*, *vocational teacher*, *senior vocational teacher*, *vocational teacher methodologist*, and *vocational teacher expert*.

VET teacher's professional standard describes the goals, fields of activity and didactical competencies of each VET teacher qualification category (*Professional Standard for Vocational Teacher/Lecturer*, 2002). The standard is the basis for planning, implementing and evaluating the curriculum of VET teacher education and training. The pedagogical competencies defined in *the standard* are divided into five areas:

- Personnel development competencies.
- Planning of module curriculum, teaching and development competencies.
- Vocational teaching program design competencies.
- School and educational system development competencies.
- Vocational subject development competencies.

The standard describes didactical competencies related to four areas, which are divided according to qualification categories of the vocational teacher. The fifth area of competency is not described in the standard since it is related to various vocations. Their descriptions are under the development of various *Expert Groups of Economy Branches* (EGEB). Moreover, this part of vocational teacher qualification, which takes into account the rapid development of sciences and technologies, is undergoing permanent changes and therefore must be under continuous development and improvement.

The consecutive model of vocational teacher education and training includes four consistent stages (Figure 4). In the *first* stage (recommended, but not compulsory), a prospective vocational teacher finishes their training in acquiring the first vocational qualification that is targeted towards labour market needs (this takes from 2 to 3 years). In the *second* stage, the prospective vocational teacher acquires higher or high education of vocational qualification (3 to 6 years). In the *third* stage, the prospective vocational teacher obtains no less than 3 years of practical work experience in the field of the acquired vocational qualification. In the *fourth* stage, the vocational teacher begins to work in the same vocational program of VET school, which corresponds with their vocational qualification. During the first 2 years of work in a VET school, the student acquires pedagogical qualification. In this conception *only the fourth stage* is discussed.

The *fifth* stage illustrates the continuing professional development of the VET teacher based on the lifelong learning paradigm. In the *six* stage, the vocational teacher could graduate with a master's and later a doctoral degree, acquiring higher professional or researcher qualifications.

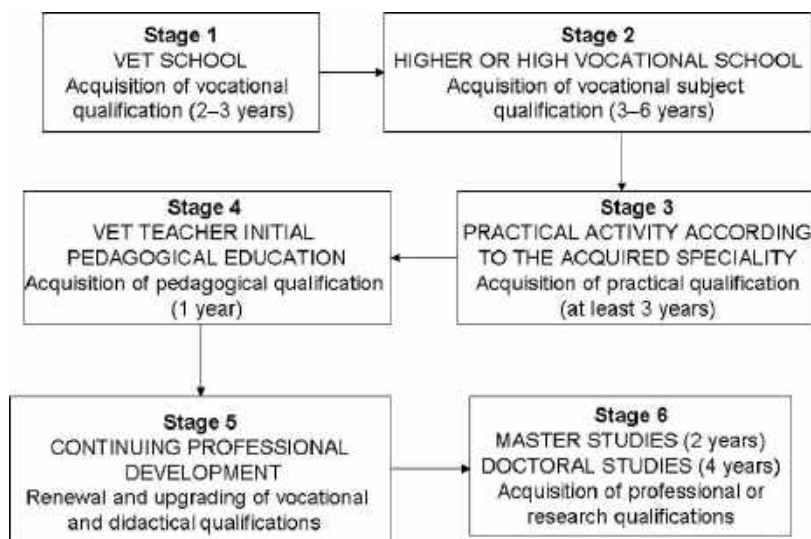


Figure 4 General Scheme for Vocational Teacher Education and Training in Lithuania.

The Curriculum for initial pedagogical training of VET teacher is based on the competencies of a vocational teacher's qualification category described in the standard. This qualification level is obligatory and enables the teacher or lecturer to operate independently in a school. The curriculum of initial pedagogical training refers to a balanced combination of theoretical and practical studies in higher school. In regard to the present educational level of VET teachers, concrete pedagogical competencies and accessibility to studies (taking into account place and time of studies), active involvement of employers and other social partners in planning, implementing and evaluating curriculum of education are extremely important. The tutor's and mentor's roles here are crucial.

The evaluation of the achievements in initial pedagogical training of VET teacher is based on the principle of *portfolio*, creating prerequisites for accreditation of previously acquired competencies.

The final assessment of the achievements of an individual VET teacher student is accomplished by summarising the results of the 'portfolio', the experimental lesson and the final work.

Curriculum for in-service education and training of VET teachers depends on scientific, technological, and pedagogical innovations, acquisition of competencies targeted towards a higher vocational teacher category, as well as to

individual needs or interests. Hence, there could be three types of modules for in-service VET teacher education and training:

- a) Curriculum of strategic competencies that corresponds to the latest strategic scientific and practical innovations;
- b) Curriculum of the competencies necessary for achieving higher qualification categories, described in the *VET teacher professional standard* and,
- c) Curriculum of the individual competencies, which indicates VET institution, or VET teachers, personal development needs.

8 Conclusions

The EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000) made clear the importance of education as a driving force of human resource development in a long-term paradigm, which could make Europe more competitive in the world.

The acquisition of pedagogical qualifications is the most urgent need for vocational teachers in Lithuania since more than 70% of them do not have *any* pedagogical background.

On the other hand, about 70% of vocational pedagogues of Lithuania have more than 10 years pedagogical work experience in VET schools, colleges or labour market training centres. Hence, creating *a prior* learning assessment methodology is urgent. It is also a useful tool to saving the state's and the clients' (VET teachers without pedagogical qualification) financial and time resources.

The main new challenges for VET teacher education and training are the following:

- Changing the stereotypes of *pedagogical behaviour* of VET teachers from a 'teacher centred' to a 'student centred' approach.
- Changing VET schools into *learning organisations*.
- *Integration of the future working place* into the vocational teacher student's education and training process; *or* close interaction of theoretical and practical studies in VET teacher education and training.
- Changes in *curriculum design*, from curriculum build-up on *separate vocational subjects* to curriculum build-up on *integrated modules* targeted to concrete competencies; Turning the vocational teacher/lecturer to a *net-worker* across the school boundaries.
- Turning VET teachers from *reflective practitioners* to *small-scale re-searching practitioners*.

The main actors of competency based vocational teacher education and training are the *lecturer*, *tutor*, VET school *mentor* and the *vocational teacher student* of a university or other higher pedagogical institutions, who already work in a VET school or college. The success of vocational teachers education and training depends on the quality of the *interaction* between tutor, mentor and vocational teacher student.

Regarding VET school's *readiness to change*, three types of VET schools could be distinguished: VET schools which *wonder* when something happens; VET schools which *observe* how and what is happening; and those VET schools, which *achieve* something.

VET schools as organisations could be divided into *effective* and *ineffective* schools ('proactive', 'fighting', 'wandering', 'floating', 'sinking'). Some of them could be *developing* and *effective* VET schools, some, on the contrary, are—*dying* and *ineffective* VET schools.

A very important parameter of an educational institute is considered to be the learning speed of the institute's members—it must be faster than the speed of change outside the VET school.

Opening VET schools to the labour market, implementation of the action reflection learning approach, and close cooperation and interaction between universities and VET schools could stimulate the organisational development of VET schools and assure an improved role of VET schools in competency based VET teacher education and training.

The main principles of composition of change agent teams (CAT) must cover the 'space beyond the school' (head of the VET school), the 'classroom space' (experienced teacher in the classroom) and 'VET school space' (experienced teacher in VET school organisational development field).

A university tutor must support CAT activity by guiding, mentoring and counselling.

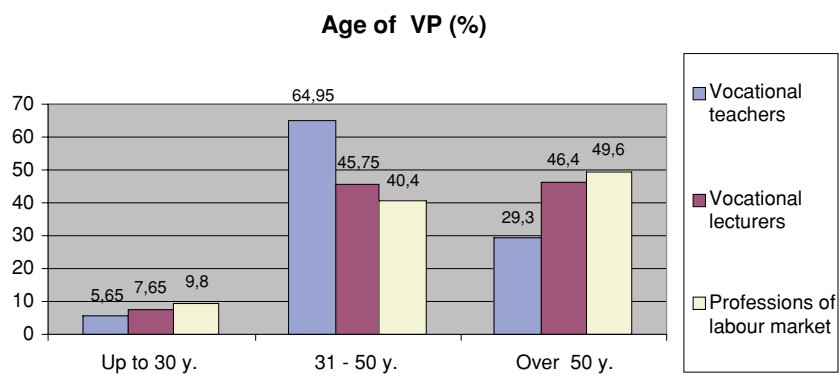
VET teachers' education and training in Lithuania adhere to the principles of *decentralisation*, *openness*, *systematisation*, *compatibility*, *cooperation* and *particularity*.

The main parameters of VET teacher education and training are *professional standards* for VET teachers, *consecutive model* for VET teacher education and training, and the *curriculum* of initial, and in-service, pedagogical education based on *The Professional Standard for VET Teachers*.

The strategy of Lithuanian vocational teacher education and training is also based upon other reports such as Regulation for Initial Pedagogical Education and Training of Vocational Teacher, Action Plan for Implementation of Strategy of Vocational Teacher Education and Training, etc. that are in the process of approval by the Ministry of Education and Science of Lithuania Republic.

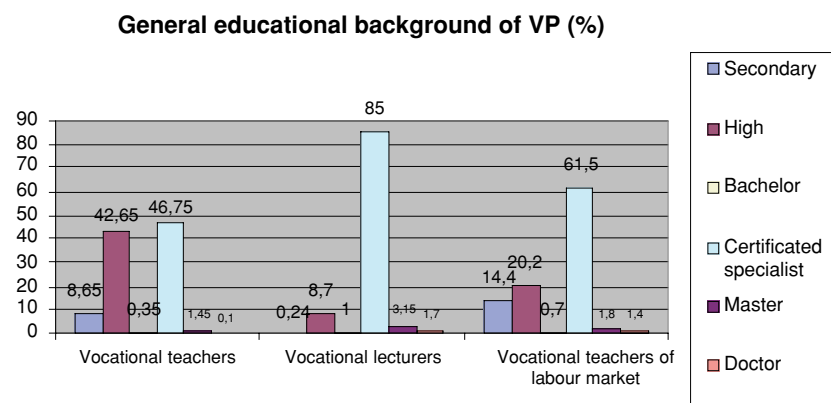
Appendix I: Age of Vocational Pedagogues (VP)

(Distinguished by investigated categories.)



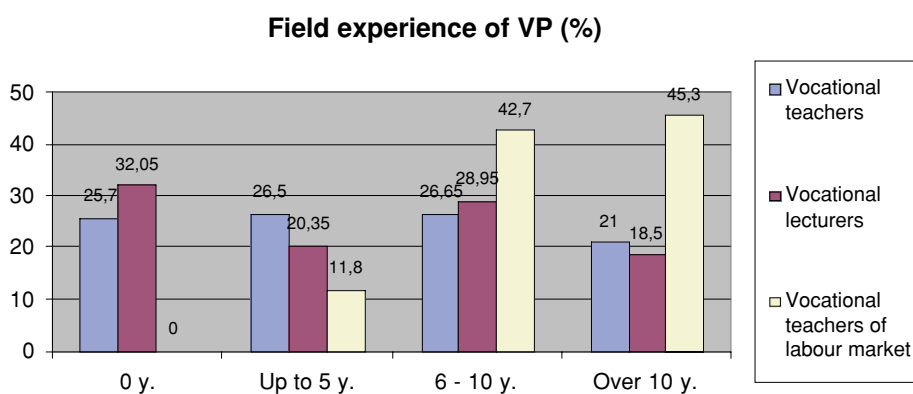
Appendix II: General Background of Vocational Pedagogues (VP)

(Distinguished by investigated categories.)



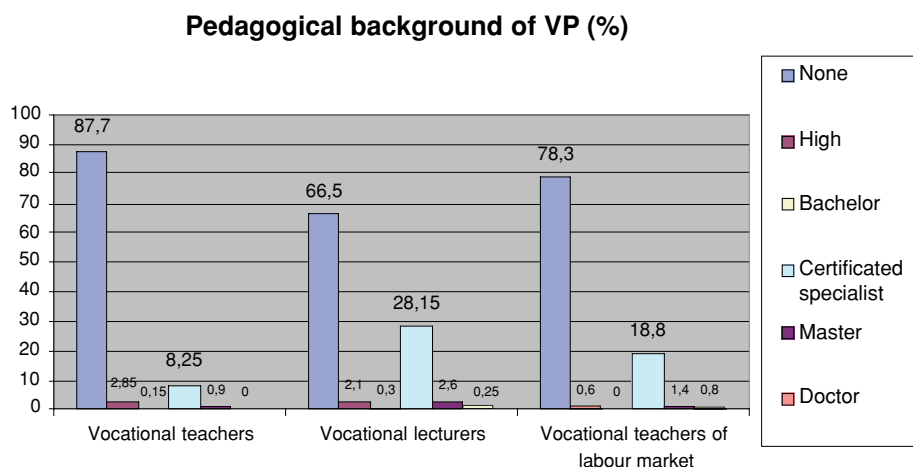
Appendix III: Experience of Work in Industry (Field Experience) of Vocational Pedagogues (VP)

(Distinguished by investigated categories.)



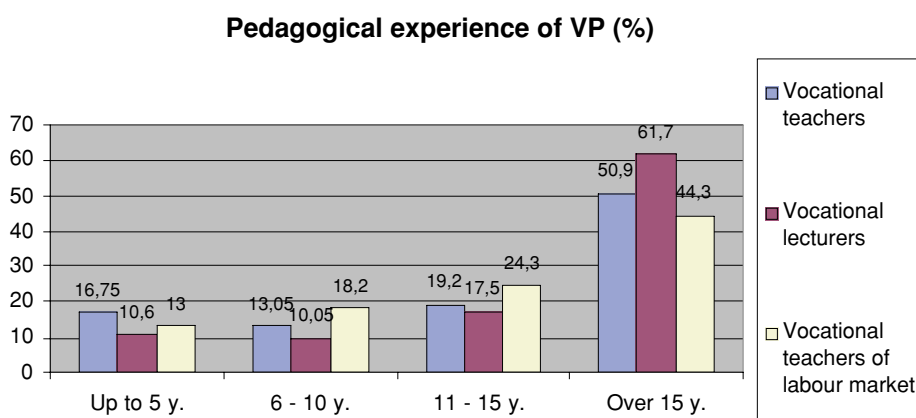
Appendix IV: Pedagogical Background of Vocational Pedagogues (VP)

(Distinguished by investigated categories.)



Appendix V: Pedagogical Experience of Vocational Pedagogues (VP)

(Distinguished by investigated categories.)



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9. Internationalisation and Co-operation in Higher Education: A Multi-National Masters Degree Programme in Vocational Education and Training

1 Internationalisation of Higher Education

Internationalisation is high on the agendas of national governments and institutions of higher education. European programmes, such as ERASMUS, and networks of universities are just two examples of how the international dimension has captured higher education over the past decade.

When examining the definition of the term ‘internationalisation’ a number of different conceptions need to be taken into account and discussed. It would be much beyond the scope of this paper to analyse the many different definitions, terms and approaches to internationalisation in higher education. However, it can probably be agreed that ‘Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and services functions of the institutions’ (Knight and de Wit, 1997:8).

The growing internationalisation of higher education can be seen as a most significant development with far reaching impacts on teaching and research. It moves from the margin to the centre of concern. It would appear to be safe to state that internationalisation is perceived as an impulse for the further development of higher education. International interaction, sharing expertise, academic networking and enriched curricula are some of the benefits that are referred to when discussing the advantages of internationalisation in higher education. As there are always two sides of a coin, the negative impacts of

internationalisation are also the subject of vivid and controversial discussion (Hortsch, 2001).

The issue of funding may undermine the notion of higher education as a 'public good'. Internationalisation may strengthen competition and, consequently, reduce co-operation among countries and institutions. The promotion of cultural diversity could be subject to erosion by an expansion of a world language and dominant western cultures.

Furthermore, the brain drain may increase as an international academic labour market evolves (IAU, 2003).

However, internationalisation of higher education appears no longer to be an option. No institution and no system is immune to the impacts of internationalisation and no institution can remain cut off from international networks, 'we can increasingly speak of an international higher education sector or a global higher education community' (IAU, 2003:21).

At the European level, the Bologna Process furthered the challenges of internationalisation to providers of higher education. In 1999, the Ministers of Education of 30 countries signed the Bologna Declaration, through which higher education institutions were invited to meet the challenge and develop a European sector of higher education (Bologna Process Committee, 1999).

The Copenhagen Process as part of the European co-operation in vocational education was spurred by the Bologna Declaration. It set incentives to develop a Europe wide framework in the area of vocational education and training. On the 30 November 2002, the ministers of education of 31 European countries and the European Commission adopted the Copenhagen Declaration (2002) on enhanced co-operation in European vocational education and training.

Both the Bologna and the Copenhagen processes aim *inter alia* to develop and enlarge international co-operation. Thus the movement towards internationalisation has become of immediate relevance to providers of higher and vocational education in all European countries.

On the basis of Bologna and Copenhagen one could expect the development of new co-operative degree programmes in the area of Vocational Education. The process of internationalisation outlined above calls for new approaches to the development of personnel in higher and vocational education, for both management and teaching staff. Yet, it appears that in this area there seems to be reluctance to co-operate internationally in the delivery of degree programmes. While it is already a common approach to co-operate internationally in the area of business administration, programmes in Vocational Education are rare.

One possible explanation for this reluctance could be the educational system structures found in the different countries. Traditionally, education in general

is an area, which falls under the national responsibilities. Even though the subsidiarity principle in education is not questioned, the processes and development initiated at an international level clearly demand broader and internationally orientated approaches to training VET staff.

The following example illustrates how International and European co-operation respectively can be put into practise.

A joint MSc programme has been developed which involves three Baltic partner universities, a British and a German university.

2 A Multi-National Masters Degree Programme in 'International Vocational Education'

Objective and Justification of the Project

Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg in Germany has developed an MSc course which operates over four semesters in co-operation with Anglia Polytechnic University in Great Britain. The course is titled 'International Vocational Education' and leads to a dual award. The planned course involves the three Baltic States as partners, namely the following three institutions: Riga Technical University (Latvia), Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and Tallinn Pedagogical University (Estonia).

The project's aim is the international recognition of a Masters level qualification for vocational education and training experts. The latter shall respectively have, or gain, professional operational strategies as well as the ability to innovate and as a result will be able to bring about lasting system structuring and supervisory work at all vocational education and training levels—from planning to implementation.

In view of the EU enlargement, the project involves the three new EU member states Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, since these countries are facing a high regional demand for a sound interdisciplinary scientific qualification in the field of vocational education and training. The new eastern EU member states are currently undergoing drastic changes within their vocational education and training systems. Since the regaining of their sovereignty, the Baltic States, which, among other eastern European states, joined the EU in May 2004, have been making enormous efforts to re-orient their national vocational education and training systems.

The development of these new systems has been considerably oriented towards European standards in order to create transparent structures, following the EU guidelines.

The development of national vocational education and training systems in the Baltic States is confronted by several problems. Among others, initial and further (in-service) vocational education and training of specialised personnel is still considered difficult and problematic.

The main reason is that these countries lack appropriately developed structures for their vocational education and training systems because of historic factors, many the result of years of economic neglect. The lack of professionally trained personnel in public and private training institutions is also significant.

On the basis of the above mentioned factors as well as with regard to the further development of European vocational education and training, the necessity arose to introduce a course for the initial and in-service training of specialised personnel involved in vocational education and training. For some years, the modularisation of courses and the introduction of graduated degrees according to Anglo-American models aimed at the improvement of the attractiveness of courses have been discussed at an institutional-political level. As the partner institutes and partner universities respectively in Great Britain (Anglia Polytechnic University) and Germany (Otto-von-Guericke-University) have gained experience in similar projects, these countries are given significant tasks within the project.

The Department of Vocational Education and Human Resource Development at Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg in co-operation with the School of Education at Anglia Polytechnic University (Chelmsford/Cambridge) deliver the international course of studies that leads to a professionally qualifying degree 'Master of Science in International Vocational Education', which is in line with the Baltic States' needs. Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg is prepared to take on the functions of project co-ordination and management within the context of the development of a modular consecutive course.

Through the development of the 'Master of Science in International Vocational Education', the Department of Vocational Education and Human Resource Development at Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg intends to develop new ways of teaching.

The course's internationalisation and the contributions of guest lecturers from the countries involved in the project are—among others—new approaches to teaching and should contribute to a further enhancement of the European dimension within vocational education and training. The target development of experts in the field of initial and in-service training at a high level should serve as the foundation for the further enhancement of the personnel function. Furthermore, by carrying out the project, it is the Otto-von-Guericke-University's objective to strengthen these European higher educational institutes' competitiveness in an international context as well as to help further develop European economic structures in that promising area. In view of growing

national and international competition, commitment in this sector is urgently required.

Through this collaborative MSc course, the project should make a significant contribution to expand vocational education and training structures and to support economic development in the Baltic States, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Course Structure

Access to the course can only be granted following successful completion of professionally qualifying studies. The course lasts for four semesters and a total of 120 ECTS are awarded. The curriculum is structured according to modular principles and tuition is bilingual (English and German), that contributes to the students' internationally oriented training. Bilingual teaching plays a crucial role especially for the Baltic States as new members of the EU. In addition to teaching being carried out by experts from all partner countries; students will have the opportunity of spending a part of their studies in different countries; thus, the international dimension can be integrated into the curriculum.

These new innovations have a considerable effect on the courses' attractiveness and support the further development of the international profile, consequently contributing to a higher quality of study.

Course of Studies

Preparation Semester

In this semester, the students from the Baltic States are prepared for their MSc studies in terms of language; the preparation is carried out by the Baltic partners. The prospective students attend language courses (German and English), that they finish with a final examination.

This includes successful participation in the examination procedures of TestDaF (German as a foreign language) level 4 and TOEFL 550/213 scores.

Summer School

This will involve preparation of the Baltic States' students in terms of technical and professional skills and knowledge in addition to language knowledge and skills at Otto-von-Guericke-University, Magdeburg, until appropriate structures will be established at the Baltic partner institutes.

First Semester

Studies at Otto-von-Guericke-University, Magdeburg.

Second Semester

Studies at Otto-von-Guericke-University, Magdeburg and work shadowing in vocational educational institutes in Germany or organisations of development co-operation such as Inwent.

Third Semester

Studies at Anglia Polytechnic University Chelmsford/Cambridge.

Fourth Semester

Research for a Masters thesis either at Otto-von-Guericke-University, Magdeburg or Anglia Polytechnic University, Chelmsford/Cambridge.

Currently, a guest chair is being applied for, which will be integrated into the previously expounded concept of the course. The aim of that chair is to provide appropriate international expertise and at the same time develop personnel for the Baltic partners, since apart from teaching commitments, the prospective guest lecturers will also work on research projects.

3 Sustainability and Prospects for the Future

The sustainability of the project is guaranteed since the Baltic States will develop their expertise as prospective providers of the course 'Master of Science in International Vocational Education'. After 3 years, there will be an evaluation of the extent to which the Baltic States are capable of providing either elements of the studies autonomously or the complete course at their institutions.

At present, there do not exist well-developed structures for the higher level study of Vocational Education and Training at Baltic States' universities and colleges.

The course should also contribute to scientific human resource development in the field of vocational education and training. Only this combination of course development and human resource development can ensure a lasting effect for the project.

4 Résumé

Diversity can be both strength and challenge. Varying structures and practices in Vocational Education and Training (VET) at a European level make co-operation challenging. European vocational education and training can be developed and enriched by European collaboration. Internationalisation and European developments demand co-operation more immediate than ever before.

The field of Vocational Education has been an area in which co-operative international degree programmes are rare. The co-operative delivery of degree programmes has been practised in other domains such as Business Administration and fields of modern sciences, e.g., Bioengineering, more frequently.

The example of a multi-national Masters Degree programme in 'International Vocational Education' illustrates how the international/European dimension can contribute to strengthen the European higher educational institutes' competitiveness in an international context as well as to help further develop European economic structures.

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10. Developing Globally Competent University Teachers

Summary

What is global competence in university teaching? And, assuming we can provide some sort of reasonable answer to that first question, how might it be developed? What is argued within this chapter is that the traditional university assumption that subject experts (with no—or scarcely any—pedagogic training) make fit teachers is even less justifiable when these teachers travel abroad to teach overseas students than when they operate in their home university with students who, for the most part, share many of their own socio-cultural values and beliefs. Given that higher education teachers in the UK are now expected (though not required) to seek membership of the Higher Education Academy based either on their completion of an accredited training programme or on their submission of a portfolio evidencing their practical competence in teaching there is therefore a national, systematic, move towards pedagogic training. However it is argued further that, though necessary and desirable for all university teachers wherever they are teaching, academic subject knowledge and accredited pedagogic skills are still insufficient for those wishing to be regarded internationally as globally competent teachers. Two further requirements are both necessary and desirable for global competence in teaching: the adoption of a transformatory and democratic approach to education and the development of what may be termed an ethnographic stance to teaching abroad.

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1 Introduction

Before considering the notion of global competence in university teaching I would like to say a little about the two terms ‘global’ and ‘international’. Often I use them to mean much the same thing, as virtual synonyms for ‘worldwide’.

However the term ‘globalisation’ is itself a highly contested concept and is used either pejoratively to indicate the crushing or demeaning of the local or the indigenous by, for example, multinational corporations or, in a more laudatory sense, to support a view of greater social, economic and cultural freedom through the exchange of goods and ideas in the global market-place. I try not to use ‘global’ in either of these pejorative or laudatory ways although I show in this paper that I am aware of some of the dangers of socio-economic imperialism or colonialism which are seen by some critics as examples of globalisation. I am also inclined to use ‘international’ in a somewhat positive ideological sense to support or advocate the development of a community of interest and co-operation between nations. In this sense I am writing more as an internationalist than as a globalist and I could, perhaps more appropriately, have entitled this chapter ‘Developing internationally competent university teachers’.

2 Global Competence in University Teaching

Anyone at all acquainted with higher education (certainly in the UK) will be aware that the notion of competence is also itself highly contested. Indeed Barnett examined both operational and academic competence and judged that ‘both are limiting ideologies, and contain impoverished views as to what it might be to develop interactive minds engaging with the world and searching collaboratively for wisdom’ (Barnett, 1994:186).

Nevertheless, even for Barnett, ‘competence is not to be derided’ (p. 187) so that we need initially to bear in mind that, whatever else may be desirable for university teachers, both academic and operational competence are a *sine qua non* of their professional lives, including those times when they may be functioning abroad.

3 Academic Competence

What then would be expected of academically competent university teachers operating abroad? At the very least they would be expected to have a clear general understanding of their field together with a deeper knowledge of some

particular specialised aspect of it. Knowledge here would include skills in the major research and scholarly methodologies used in their discipline. In other words it is likely, in a global context at least, that university teachers would be expected to be both generalists and specialists at one and the same time in order to meet the wide range of expectations of overseas students and staff.

Their overseas students and academic colleagues would also, undoubtedly, expect that university teachers travelling abroad would have diligently attended to their own continuing professional development so that what they carry on with them is up-to-date and not obsolete (see Knight, 1998:248), where professional obsolescence in higher education is defined as ‘the way that changes in the work environment (for example, the need for new knowledge, changed expectations, new working roles) mean that existing competence has not deteriorated; demands have moved ahead of it’.

All this is, of course, fairly obvious. However the main danger is that university teachers (and not just in the context of teaching abroad) may feel that attending to the disciplinary or cognitive or content aspects of their teaching—their academic competence—is the be-all and end-all of their responsibilities. After all university teaching is university teaching wherever it is located and as long as the material is reasonably up-to-date (and not completely obsolete) and the ground is more or less covered then there won’t be too many complaints.

4 Operational Competence

Such a view fails to take into account the need also for operational competence in university teaching. In addition to ‘knowing that’ (their subject expertise) university teachers also need to ‘know how’ (their pedagogical approach) and, in the global context, they need the additional operational competence of how to function in different socio-cultural conditions.

Unfortunately a large number of university lecturers, although confident in their academic competence, are somewhat under prepared for the actual process of teaching itself whether in a domestic or an overseas context. Indeed it is often the case that university teachers are notoriously unreflective about their own approaches to teaching and adopt strategies which derive almost entirely from how they themselves were taught as undergraduates, with understandably mixed results.

Part of the trouble here is that many university teachers inherit what may be termed a functionalist model of education, a model whose dominant epistemology emphasises the expert transmission of a non-negotiable curriculum of

concepts and facts to relatively passive students via highly didactic pedagogic strategies.

Ramsden (1992) characterises this theory of teaching as the telling or transmission of unproblematic knowledge: teachers are regarded (even on occasions revered) as the authoritative source of undistorted information about the world and there is also a 'belief that the fundamental problems of university instruction inhere in the amount of information to be transmitted, and that these problems can be solved by technical fixes designed to transmit more of it faster' (pp. 111–112).

In other words there is a tendency to offer technological solutions to pedagogical problems on the assumption that it is better or more effective transmission of knowledge (or, more accurately, information) which is the key issue in university teaching.

Askew and Carnell (1998) also attack this functionalist model of education because it is mechanistic and because it fails to take a holistic approach to the educational needs of students including, in a rapidly changing technological and global age, their needs for learning how to learn and for keeping up-to-date. This form of operational competence is so concerned with what teachers transmit that it neglects almost entirely the learning strategies students might adopt to further their own understanding. Consequently and inevitably functionalism and operationalism seem to encourage a surface approach (Ramsden, 1992:81; Askew and Carnell, 1998:87).

5 An Expanded Operational Competence

Both Ramsden and Askew and Carnell offer alternative views of what we may take to be an expanded operational competence in university teaching. In Ramsden's case, he espouses a 'theory of teaching as making learning possible' (pp. 114–116) which moves teaching beyond the transmission of academic content towards a co-operative process which encourages students to engage actively with the subject matter. Here teaching is not so much authoritative telling as speculative questioning and inquiry with teachers becoming reflective practitioners who listen to their students (and to other teachers) about puzzling events that require reconceptualisation. Teaching thus has to be seen as context-related, uncertain and continuously improvable with a central function of recognising different ways of encouraging different students to learn using different sequences of material and learning tasks. This suggests that successful approaches to teaching students in, say, a UK context may not necessarily be satisfactorily exported overseas where both the students taught and the educational context are different.

6 A Transformatory and Democratic Approach

Askew and Carnell (1998) argue for a much more radical view of education as a process of transformation (presumably beyond both operational and academic competence). They criticise what they identify as the dominant model of education ('individualistic, authoritarian, hierarchical, competitive and focussed on *what* is learned') and offer instead an approach which is 'collaborative, non-hierarchical, and which focuses on the learning experiences and processes in the social context' (p. 167).

They maintain that this transformatory approach 'sees everyone as proactive learners who can use intellectual and emotional skills to initiate, negotiate, evaluate their experiences and bring about actions for change' (p. 167).

Askew and Carnell also emphasise the need for a democratic approach which empowers teachers to contribute 'to a vision of individual and global change based on co-operation, power-sharing, justice and learning' (p. 167). Indeed 'the increasing democratisation of political systems' (see Sadlak, 1998:100) is identified by UNESCO as one of the major forces likely to be shaping the society of the 21st century and as such must necessarily have its impact on university teachers operating in a global context. In a sense they will be expected to espouse democratic values in their own teaching and adopt more democratic teaching and assessment strategies. And as Palous (1995:177) has argued:

Universities and institutions of higher education, in general, have their own significant role in a global coexistence, and this is their responsibility for introducing their graduates to the movement of self-transcendence described: this means that they must lead them to openness.

By 'openness', which I take to be an especially democratic and transforming feature, Palous means 'academic disputation and learning' so that university teachers should not only pass on knowledge and skills (at home and abroad) but also be 'open in their field of inquiry, problematics and controversy' (p. 177).

In effect globally competent university teachers not only have to see themselves as academically and pedagogically competent but also take on the role of democratic global citizens with all of the risks, rights and duties entailed. One particular danger for the global teacher is 'cultural homogenisation which destroys local cultures' (Urry, 1998:13).

Global rights, which one might expect teachers to want for both themselves and their (overseas) students, could include:

- access to the Internet and other electronic media;
- the ability to migrate from one society to another, to stay and to return;
- and

- the ability to carry one's culture and its central icons with one and to encounter on arrival a hybrid culture containing some elements of one's culture.

And global duties might include:

- demonstrating a stance of cosmopolitan openness towards other environments and cultures;
- engaging in appropriate forms of behaviour with regard to other cultures, environments and politics which are consistent with notions of sustainability;
- responding to images, icons, narratives and so on, which address people as citizens of the globe rather than as purely citizens of a nation, ethnic group, gender, class or generation; and
- seeking to convince others that they should also seek to act on behalf of the globe as a whole and not of particular bounded territories.

This transformatory and democratic approach to education fits in very clearly with Knowles' andragogical model of learning with its emphasis on the increasingly self-directed learner, the development of a warm, relaxed, trusting, informal, collaborative climate or context for learning, the diagnosis of learning needs and designing of learning plans by mutual assessment and negotiation, the use of inquiry projects, independent study and experiential techniques as major learning activities and evaluation by learner-collected evidence validated by peers, facilitators and experts (Knowles, 1995:89–90). Indeed Knowles argues that an essential part of creating an atmosphere conducive to learning is the creation of a culture of openness and authenticity, both of which are vital to a transformatory and democratic approach to education (p. 7):

When people feel free to say what they really think and feel, they are more willing to examine new ideas and risk new behaviours than when they feel defensive. If teachers or trainers demonstrate openness and authenticity in their own behaviour, this will be a model that learners want to adopt.

7 The Dangers of 'Intellectual Imperialism'

I would also suggest that an approach to teaching abroad which goes beyond mere academic competence and which espouses a transformatory view of education needs to take into account the assumption that different cultures have different views about the purpose of higher education. In many countries such purposes may include the creation or preservation of a national culture or the production of skilled manpower and the promotion of national economic development which may, consequently, limit the achievement of the various

aims typically urged upon us as university teachers in the UK by, for example, the Dearing Report (Dearing, 1997:5.39):

- a commitment to the pursuit of truth;
- a responsibility to share knowledge;
- freedom of thought and expression;
- analysing evidence rigorously and using reasoned argument to reach a conclusion;
- a willingness to listen to alternative views and judge them on their merits;
- taking account of how one's own arguments will be perceived by others;
- and
- a commitment to consider the ethical implications of different findings and practises.

We need to be aware, therefore, that educational values such as these (which are relatively non-contentious in a Western European or North American context) may well clash with those espoused by staff and students abroad and may produce, if we export them as our taken-for-granted assumptions about higher education, a certain degree of 'ambivalence, frustration and disjunction' (George, 1995:14). Indeed we need to be especially sensitive to the danger of 'intellectual imperialism' where we boldly export our academic products, avowed principles and operational processes, irrespective of their western origins, to students abroad carrying with us an 'undercurrent of the cult of the individual, personal empowerment and certification, and competitive striving' since these 'minor educational sub-texts may grow to catastrophic proportions in exotic environments' (Johnston, 1999).

8 Global Teaching Without Domination

This raises another vital question (at home and abroad): how can we educate without dominating? Perhaps a working answer to this question is that provided by Seller (1997) when she suggested that all educators (whether at home or abroad?) would agree that they were aiming at 'enabling students to scrutinize their world and their response to it, to place themselves in relationship to their culture, so that they can act responsibly, both for themselves and their society'. Otherwise, if we fail to adopt this student-enabling approach to education, we may well personify, in our role as teachers abroad, a privileging of the viewpoint of the middle-class white European (usually) male whilst 'rendering all other perspectives, experiences, voices—in brief people—simply as other' (see Seller, 1997:89). (Actually Seller was mainly writing about the way that women's views are subject to domination by men but I am using what she said to serve as a summary of the dangers we create if we simply export our

home-based assumptions abroad—we turn our foreign students into not quite our own kind of person but into alien others.)

Perhaps what we need is a succinct model of good university teaching, a model which powerfully conveys the main requirements for good teaching virtually anywhere and which includes a built-in sense of respect for diversity and otherness. What follows is a suggestion which owes much to research in the USA which has attempted to convey the broad range of teaching in the country's diversified system of higher education, which contains over 3,600 institutions and which attempts to cope with a huge diversity of student groups from the remedial (and the multiethnic) to the post-doctoral. It is a model (based on Wingspread, 1993) which explicitly:

- values teaching and learning as more concerned with *inquiry* into knowledge rather than transmission of knowledge;
- encourages *student–teacher contact*;
- promotes *co-operation among students*;
- fosters an *active and deep approach to learning*;
- requires *prompt feedback* to students;
- provides *prime time on main learning tasks*;
- generates high expectations and individual responsibility; and
- respects diversity.

It is the requirement that we must respect diversity in our teaching which takes on an especially crucial significance when we are abroad since there we have to become even more sensitive not only to our own, but also to our students', inevitable otherness. The European Commission has endorsed not only the “active pedagogies” which feature in this emerging global model but also a specific advance known as “border pedagogy” which is defined as ‘a strategy for learning about the cultural Other, by looking critically how images, representations and texts are constructed, and at their hidden messages. This approach facilitates learning how to identify one's own “borders”, those of others, and the borders of the external social world. Learning to appreciate differences as a positive opportunity must become one of the key competencies for Europeans’ (EC, 1997:19) and for anyone else who is at all concerned to become a globally or internationally competent teacher.

9 Taking an Ethnographic Approach

Indeed we seem unlikely to become globally competent teachers unless we adopt an ethnographic or intercultural approach to our own learning about others:

The skills involved here [and more especially there] are analogous to research skills, in particular those practised in modern ethnography or as developed through intercultural education. Most simply, these skills involve making the familiar strange and the strange familiar: being able to switch between standpoints and identify positions, and between empathy and critical distance . . .

The idea of ‘border pedagogy’ is one significant attempt to catch what is meant by education for empowerment. Crossing borders (one’s own, those of others, internal vs. external borders) is a core skill for European citizens’ (EC, 1997:59–60) and, I would again add, for any university teacher, whether from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australasia or Europe, who intends to become competent in the use of ‘genuinely intercultural teaching strategies’ abroad.

What I am suggesting therefore is that global competence in university teaching has to take on a deliberately ethnographic turn if it is to be more than merely academically or operationally effective.

What I think this means is that university staff, when they are travelling abroad for (short or long) periods of teaching, need to see themselves not just as academics or even as andragogical experts (though both are necessary and desirable) but also as being (as far as is practicable):

- concerned with sharing the lives and culture of those who are being taught;
- interested in the everyday life of the overseas institution and its environment;
- focussed on discovering how students and teachers abroad see and understand the world; and
- aware that what they themselves see abroad is a construction made out of their own experience and that their own conceptual tools are neither objectively neutral nor passive—they cannot represent the reality of abroad, instead they construct their version of abroad.

In effect an ethnographical approach to becoming globally competent teachers requires us to be cautious about offering a privileged view of the world based on an academic expertise which may appear to reject or deny other perspectives. Instead an ethnographical approach would encourage students abroad to examine their own views of the world and to set them alongside and in comparison with those new perspectives brought by visiting teachers.

The central point of learning, anywhere, is that which enables students (and us) ‘to see something in the world in a different way’ (Bowden and Marton, 1998:7). As such:

Learning from other people means that we become aware of their ways of seeing things, regardless of whether or not we are convinced by, or appropriate, their ways of seeing. We can talk about a collective consciousness, an awareness of others’ ways of seeing

things, as linking individual consciousnesses to each other. From this point of view it is highly relevant for students to learn from each other, as it is for teachers to learn from other teachers. We become aware of our own way of seeing something as a way of seeing only through the contrast with other ways of seeing the same thing. (Bowden and Marton, 1998:14–15)

As Bowden and Marton emphasise, this view of learning, which I would suggest should also characterise the approach of globally competent teachers, requires ‘a profound respect for other people’s views, and in fact a profound respect for other people’.

Perhaps, however, there is still a danger here of my supporting, even propounding, views of learning and of globally competent teaching which are themselves based on a typically Western European perspectives and which may well be regarded as alien elsewhere in the world. How can this dilemma be resolved? Perhaps the way forward here is that indicated by Bowden and Marton when they suggest that having a profound respect for other people’s views of the world demands of us a tolerance which implies that scholarship (including—to use Ernest Boyer’s term—the scholarship of teaching) cannot exist without the realisation that, though we think we are right in what we teach, we may actually be wrong (p. 15).

Perhaps too the justification for urging an ethnographic approach to global teaching is that which the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1998:143) suggests in terms of ethnography itself:

The risks are worth running because running them leads to a thoroughgoing revision of our understanding of what it is to open (a bit) the consciousness of one group of people to (something of) the life-form of another, and in that way to (something of) their own.

Furthermore, just as ethnography itself ‘will involve enabling conversation across societal lines’, so too will taking an ethnographic approach to teaching that will:

enlarge the possibility of intelligible discourse between people quite different from one another in interest, outlook, wealth and power, and yet contained in a world where, tumbled as they are into endless connection, it is increasingly difficult to get out of each other’s way. (p. 147)

Overall it is suggested that the achievement of global competence in teaching requires at least four major features or characteristics:

- recognised academic competence (which is up-to-date and not obsolete);
- operational (pedagogical/andragogical) competence as a teacher of adults;
- a transformatory and democratic approach to education; and
- an ethnographic approach to people and cultures.

10 Developing Globally Competent University Teachers

Assuming that this tentative analysis of global competence in university teaching has some merit how might an institution go about helping its staff develop in the directions intended?

Academic competence is usually (and non-problematically?) evidenced in our institutions on the basis of qualifications held (the PhD is already the norm for university teachers in the USA and is rapidly becoming so in the UK and other western universities) together with current research output (now monitored regularly through the Higher Education Funding Council's Research Assessment Exercise in the UK) and subject-updating through staff development activities such as subject-centred conferences and seminars.

Operational (pedagogical/andragogical) competence is at long last being addressed at the systemic level in the UK following the Dearing Report and its recommendation that the HE system establish an Institute of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILT). (Now included within the UK's Higher Education Academy). However pressure is now on universities and colleges to provide their teachers with either appropriate (and HEA-accredited) training programmes (such as the PGCE and MA programmes which have been created in many universities over the past 5–10 years in order to provide mainly new teachers with an effective induction into teaching in higher education) or with opportunities for portfolio-building in order to evidence their potential suitability for full membership of the HEA. Indeed it is also likely that candidates for membership of the HEA will be expected to demonstrate that they know and understand

- the subject material which they will teach;
- how their subject is learnt and taught;
- how students learn, both generically and in their subject;
- teaching approaches;
- the use of learning technologies;
- techniques for monitoring and evaluating their own teaching;
- their institution's mission and how it affects teaching and learning strategies;
- implications of quality assurance for practice; and
- regulations, policies and practices affecting their own work (see CVCP, 1998, paragraph 2.6).

Such a list of requirements goes beyond the usual notion of academic competence expected in a university teacher and makes explicit, more or less for the first time at a systemic level, a basic model of operational competence.

Unfortunately, however, despite an ever-increasing espousal of active pedagogies, many university teachers (and not just in the UK) still regard the lecture as their most effective teaching strategy. And of course it can be an effective method when the content material is new or complicated and when the skilful teacher can provide a useful overview or model to help the students out or even to motivate them through well-chosen examples, illustrations and stories.

Unfortunately, however, most of us don't know when to stop: 'The professor talks until even the monkey goes to sleep' (quoted in George, 1995:69).

Also as most of those teaching abroad would be working with groups of students whose first language is not English, they should be better understood and their students would be more attentive if they provided simple outlines, summaries, definitions of key terms, concept maps and other such aids to comprehension.

Teachers abroad could also select from a number of strategies to check out whether their students actually learn anything from their sessions:

- review student note-books for understanding of ideas;
- give mini-quizzes for self-assessment especially at the end of a session;
- check out by asking 'do you understand?' and 'do I make sense?';
- ask clear, brief questions;
- distribute questions around the class (have each students name on a card); and
- use the 1-minute paper idea (students are given 1 minute to summarise an idea or frame a response to a question).

Teachers abroad also need to find out what kinds of feedback their particular students prefer and they probably need to experiment with how they may most effectively provide it. Feedback could be in public or private, could provide clear written feedback notes, could encourage students by consistently giving them high marks, could give exemption from assignments or tests, could offer extra credit and could provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively or whatever.

However the general rules for giving feedback over here still apply over there (Gibbs, Habeshaw and Habeshaw, 1988:104):

- invite the recipient to speak first (to foster skills of self-criticism and protect self-respect);
- be specific rather than general;
- balance positive with corrective feedback;
- direct feedback to behaviour that students can actually change; and
- ask for confirmation from others (where appropriate).

Teachers abroad might also have to train overseas students in how to receive feedback (p. 104):

- listen to the feedback without comment (without explaining);
- ask for clarification at the end;
- devise action plans for improvement or to try out new ideas; and
- keep a written record for later reflection and planning.

All of this is important for teachers wishing to develop and implement their practical or operational competence when they are functioning abroad. However, they will also be expected to develop an explicit code of professional ethics and values which, if adopted and implemented by all university teachers (including those operating abroad), will go some way towards the kind of *transformatory and democratic approach to education* that I have already outlined. A suggested code for teachers in the UK included:

- a commitment to scholarship in teaching;
- a respect for individual learners and their development;
- a commitment to collegiality;
- a commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity; and
- a commitment to continued reflection and consequent improvements to practice (see CVCP, 1998, paragraph A.3.1).

The ‘commitment to scholarship in teaching’ should ensure that teachers not only keep their academic knowledge and skills up-to-date but also attend to their own pedagogical or andragogical development.

However, it is the issues of ‘respect for individual learners and their development’, the ‘commitment to collegiality’ and the ‘commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity’ which are most clearly connected to notions of transformation and democracy. Interestingly enough Dearing (1997, paragraph 23) also stressed that one of the main purposes of higher education should be ‘to play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society’ so that the notion of UK teachers travelling abroad and personifying in their teaching a democratic approach to education would seem to have at least a national justification just as UNESCO’s promotion of political democratisation also provides some sort of international or global rationale. Also Dearing’s claim that ‘our vision puts students at the centre of the process of learning and teaching’ (Dearing, 1997, paragraph 35) could be regarded as appropriate to the transformatory and democratic approach to education for the globally competent teacher. It is likely, however, given the growth of managerialism in our universities over the past 20 years or so that the principles of collegiality and democracy have been somewhat diminished and that university teachers will have to be encouraged and helped to re-discover their democratic credentials.

This could best be done through the adoption of more democratic and collegial practices in their own institutions so that they could more sensibly and authoritatively become transformatory and democratic teachers abroad. Perhaps, in order to help with the necessary debate, university staff development units could run a series of workshops or seminars under the heading 'What does it mean to be a transformatory and democratic educator at home and abroad?'.

Apart from their academic and operational competence and their transformatory and democratic approach to education I have also argued that globally competent teachers adopt *an ethnographic stance* towards their teaching abroad. How might colleges and universities encourage their staff to develop such a stance without turning them completely into social anthropologists?

Certainly those about to teach abroad (and not just for the first time) could be invited to a seminar or workshop which introduced them to some of the principles and procedures which characterise ethnography with its strong emphasis on exploring the natural setting (including that of the overseas college or university itself) and its concern to collect data from the main participants in that setting (including overseas students and teachers).

Typically an ethnographic approach to teaching abroad would entail teachers becoming skilled participant-observers of the new natural setting into which they have been relocated.

Perhaps good practice in encouraging teachers to develop an ethnographic approach to teaching would be to expect of them a report of their experience abroad, a report in which they would be expected to convince us not only that they have 'been there' but also had we been there we should have seen what they saw, felt what they felt, concluded what they concluded (Geertz, 1988:16).

Obviously teachers perceiving and reflecting upon and then reporting their experience of teaching abroad will adopt appropriate modes or strategies probably derived from their own academic backgrounds. They will see and report the new worlds they inhabited (if only briefly) as scientists, as historians, as sociologists, as linguists, as artists, for as such they have already developed powerful ways of seeing and knowing. However I would like to suggest that teachers abroad are not just scientists or artists or historians. I think they should also regard themselves as ethnographers who may choose from another interesting set of ways of perceiving and reporting what they have seen and experienced. These ways range from the comparatively simple 'teacher as tourist' to the undoubtedly complex 'teacher as social critic'. Indeed Geertz mentions each of the following as possible stances for the ethnographer since they represent different ways of gaining a view and collecting data for evaluating the experience:

- tourist;
- traveller;
- pilgrim;
- missionary;
- cartographer;
- participant-observer;
- fieldworker;
- commentator; and
- social critic.

Whilst it is most likely that the teacher abroad will, as I have already suggested, adopt the obvious role of participant-observer, part of the challenge, for the teacher as much as the ethnographer, is ‘how to sound like a pilgrim and a cartographer at the same time’ (Geertz, 1988:10).

Teachers’ adoption of an ethnographic stance would also be helped and encouraged if they were offered an effective model for initial inquiry during their time abroad. (Of course mounting such an inquiry would only be realistic if teachers were actually functioning overseas for a substantial period such as a semester or a year.)

One effective model is that offered by Carspecken (1996) who suggests a five-stage approach designed to help study ‘social action taking place in one or more social sites and to explain this action through examining locales and social systems intertwined with the site of interest’ (p. 40). This approach is most concerned ‘to assess the subjective experiences common to actors on the site and to determine the significance of the activities discovered with respect to the social system at large’ (p. 40).

Preliminary steps in the approach require the teacher-researcher to brainstorm a list of broad questions about the social site itself (such as the classroom and/or the institution in which it is located), the student and/or teacher groups concerned, and/or a particular social or educational problem (e.g., whether the teaching and learning strategies used in the overseas classroom are really appropriate for these particular students) to be examined. The teacher-researcher should also list specific items for examination such as the routines of the student group, main documents to be read and which actors (students, teachers, administrators, other stakeholders) should be interviewed or questioned.

Carspecken also suggest that teachers-researchers explore their own value orientations to discover their own biases by, for example, keeping a journal during this fieldwork (see p. 41). The first main stage of Carspecken’s model is described as: ‘Compiling the primary record through the collection of monological data’ and requires the teacher-researcher to build up a set of

notes about the social site (e.g., the classroom) and the interactions of the site's actors (students/teachers and others) through observations and conversations (see pp. 41–42).

Three of the other four stages in Carspecken's model ('preliminary reconstructive analysis', 'discovering system relations' and 'using system relations to explain findings') are, perhaps, less appropriate for a small-scale action research project conducted by an observer whose main role is teaching. However, his stage three—'dialogical data collection'—would be most useful in this instance since it entails conversing intensively with the subjects under investigation through interviews and discussion groups and 'generates data with people rather than records information about them' and as such 'democratizes the research process' (p. 42). Carspecken actually recommends that portions of his five-stage scheme may be used separately if, for example, one wished to conduct an interview-only study so this is a very flexible model which could be readily adapted for use by teachers wishing to examine and reflect upon their experience of teaching.

11 Conclusion

What is suggested in this paper is that for those teachers who wish to operate effectively abroad both academic competence and operational (especially andragogic) competence are certainly necessary and also highly desirable but are insufficient in themselves. I have argued that teachers need to be encouraged to go beyond competence by adopting not only a transformatory and democratic approach to education but also what I have termed an ethnographic stance. I believe that by going beyond competence in these two ways the dangers of cultural and academic imperialism and the inevitable spread of Western, Eurocentric culture through globalisation will be somewhat lessened by paying deliberate respect to loyal diversity and identity.

What is not discussed in this paper is why universities and colleges should even bother to consider developing globally competent teachers. I imagine that at least part of the answer must have something to do with whether we actually believe in the, perhaps utopian, idea of building a less divided global community:

In the end, educating for a global community has to do with attitude—the attitude that we relate to one another. That attitude among graduates will produce a more literate and thoughtful population. This will not occur, however, through special courses, but rather by changing the way academics think about their work.

In educating for a global community, three principles must dominate: to help students understand that we are all different, that we are all the same, and that we are all dependant on one another.

Our students need to understand that society sustains itself only to the extent that it celebrates the uniqueness of every individual. And, the last thing we can abide in an increasingly inter-dependent world is to ignore the diversity that makes us what we are and who we are. That difference has both cultural and individual components. We must help students understand a diversity that is both local and global.

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