

Vocational Education and Training

Public ignorance of VET*

Current size and achievement

Its potential for economic, personal and social development in Europe.

Presentation to Members of the European Parliament

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By Hans F. van Aalst, President of EfVET



EfVET: The European Forum of Vocational Education and Training

<http://www.efvet.org>

* VET = Vocational Education and Training



1 Public knowledge about VET far beyond knowledge of general education.

1.1 Public ignorance and no newspaper coverage

It is generally felt that VET gets far less attention by the general public and the press than general education, including University education. I did not come across data on the European level about the public appreciation of VET, but data from The Netherlands may illustrate the point.

1.1.1 VET is hardly known by the general public

About 60% of the Dutch population does not know what a Institute for Vocational Education And Training is. Between parents with children in secondary education: still 41% does not know this.

Not more that one third of the Dutch populations can make an accurate guess about the percentage of the workforce that has a VET education (60%). 36% thinks it is less (20-50) and 10 % thinks that it is more than 60%.

1.1.2 Newspapers spend 1% on VET

Only 1% (!!) of the newspaper coverage of education is about VET. Most articles are about primary education, general secondary education and tertiary education.

1.1.3 Appreciation of VET is high, but parents do not know.

Despite this ignorance, the appreciation between those who know is high. 86% thinks that VET education is good education that leads to a good job. 90% appreciates the combination of learning and working in this respect. Its mark is 7.1 on the scale from 1-10. General secondary education (havo) gets a 6.9. 70% agrees that it is important to follow VET from 18 – 65 to ensure employability. 36 % thinks that VET is a good preparation for higher vocational education and universities. 47% of students within VET or Higher Vocational education and universities agree. From parents with children in general secondary education, only 29 % thinks so.

Source: Wartenbergh-Cras, Froukje, Gerrit Frieze & Nico van Kessel (2002)

1.2 Reasons for the public ignorance

The reasons for this public ignorance are to found in the dominant values underlying our thinking and policies about education.

1.2.1 The robust model of schooling

The robust and dominant model of schooling – as it has developed in the 19th century - is based on values such as:

- Learning is something you do with your head,
- it is an individual process,
- knowledge is basically expressed in language and is objective truth (written in books and developed in academic freedom – away from practise,
- Schools are there for social discipline in the context of a nation state
- and for screening on the basis of personal merit (meritocracy), the supply is standardised, the results (on examinations) are along one dimension: educational level.
- Labour markets are stable and educational level is a good indicator and initial screening is an effective means for allocation of young people to jobs.



1.2.2 Learning in VET

Learning in VET is based on a different set of values such as

- Learning is something you do while acting and thinking at the same time,
- Learning includes working together in groups and learning needs to be guided in the light of career perspectives,
- Knowledge is embedded in a variety of resources, such as products, processes, manuals and peers and also in books,
- Schools are there to socialise in working contexts,
- Selection is on the basis of a broad set of personal and general abilities, depending on the domain of work (qualification structures);
- Labour markets are changing slowly, so qualification structures need to have some space for local adjustment and need constant revision.

My message today is that VET may have been on the side-line under the dominant 19th century model of schooling, but is a modern type of education in the context of the emerging “knowledge-“ or “network-society”. Most of the underlying values and practices are a valuable base for modern learning for economic and social development of Europe. However, the relation to labour markets needs a transformation .



2 VET in Europe

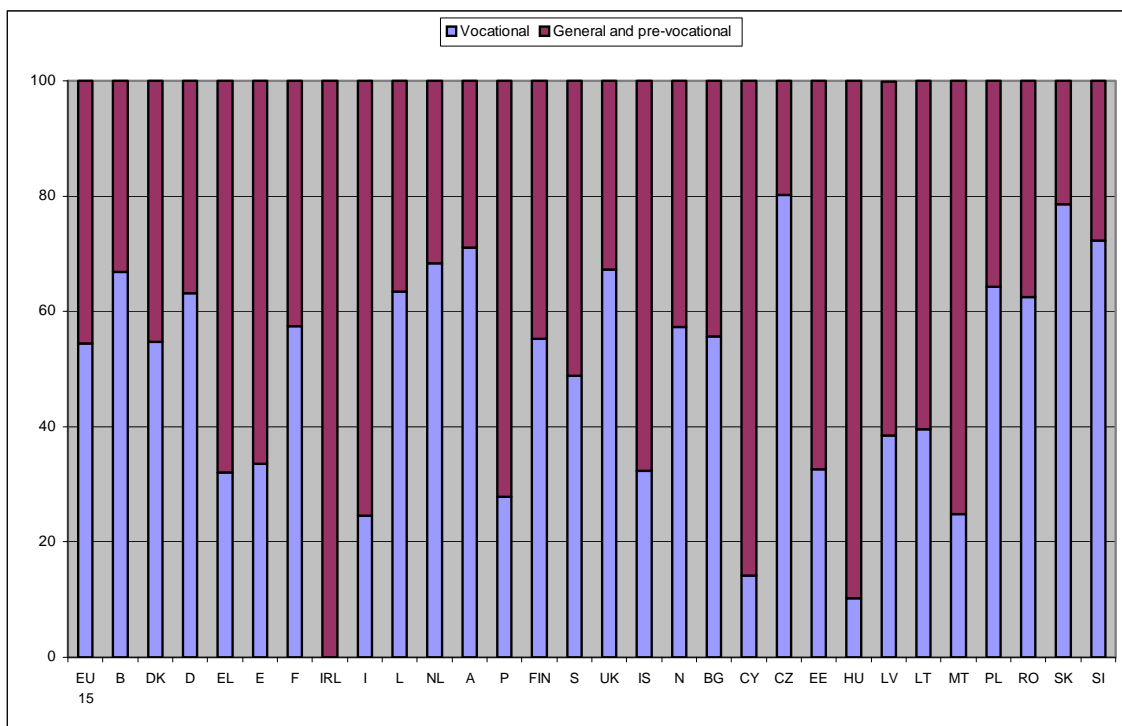
2.1 Enrolment in the education system

2.1.1 More students in VET than in General education

Unless its minor status, a larger proportion of students enrol in the vocational stream rather than in general upper secondary education (54 against 46% in the EU as a whole – Figure 5).

There are notable differences between countries: More than two thirds of students are in the vocational stream in Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia and the UK. In contrast, more than two thirds are in general education in the southern EU countries as well as Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland and Malta. In Ireland, all students are enrolled in the general stream because there is no vocational stream in schools at that level.

Figure 5. Distribution of upper secondary (ISCED 3) students in general and vocational streams, 1999/2000 (%)



NB: Students in vocational training spending 90% of their time or more within the company are not included in the UOE data collection. The coverage of the UOE and VET data collections are different, which can explain some discrepancies. For instance, students in vocational training spending 90% of their time or more within the company are not included in the UOE data collection. Pre-vocational education is included with general education. Belgium: including social advancement education; France: technological education is considered as vocational; Italy: provisional data. Students from *istituti tecnici* are included in prevocational education; United Kingdom: including ISCED 4. Students in general education are counted at a given point in time whereas students in vocational training are counted continuously, i.e. the total number of students in one school year. Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection

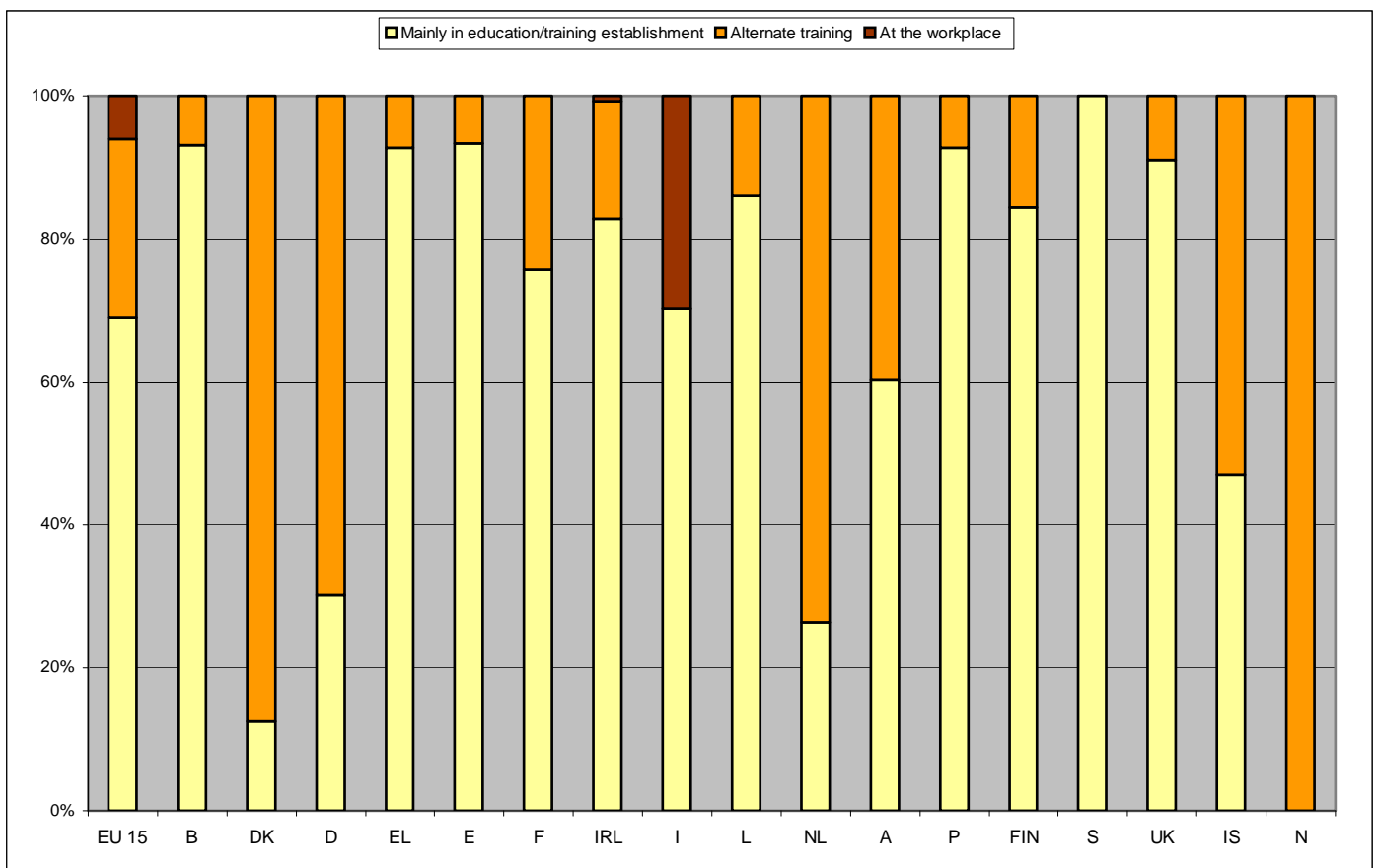
Copied from *Cedefop (2003): Key figures on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003.



2.1.2 Most participants in VET programmes mainly attend an education and training establishment

Contact with the work environment during education and training may help young people's transition onto the labour market. In EU Member States, on average, more than two thirds of participants in VET programmes mainly attend an education/ training establishment (Figure 6). The highest percentages of participants (over 90%) in mainly school-based programmes are found in Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Denmark, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands and Norway, however, show a different pattern, with most participants enrolled in alternate training programmes. Only Italy (and Ireland) have programmes taking place almost exclusively at the workplace, the so-called *Apprendistato* and *Contratto di formazione-lavoro*.

Figure 6. Distribution of participants in VET programmes by place of tuition, 1997/98 (%)



NB: Mainly in an education/training establishment: 75% or more of education/training time is spent in an education/training establishment, the rest is spent in a work environment (enterprise or other). Alternate training: between 10 and 74% of education/training time is spent in an education/training establishment, the rest is spent in a work environment (enterprise or other). At the workplace: less than 10% of education/training time is spent in an education/training establishment, the rest is spent in a work environment. Source: Eurostat, VET data collection

Copied from Cedefop (2003): Key figures on vocational education and training. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003.

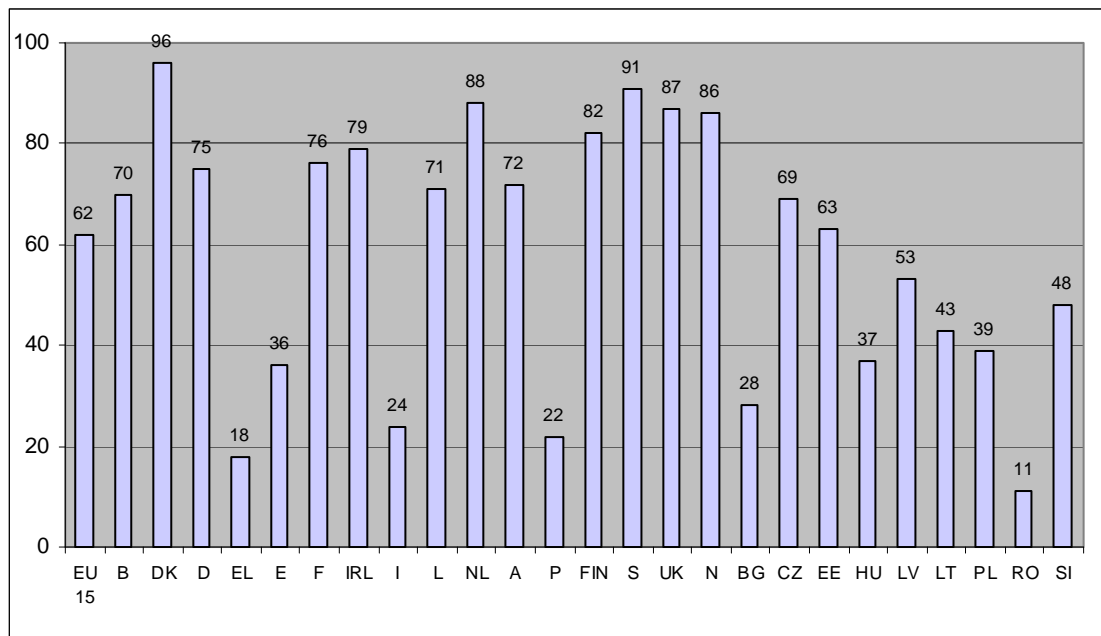
2.2 Continuing vocational education and training

On average, 62% of enterprises in the EU provided continuing vocational training. However, values are different across countries. Denmark heads the list with 96% and Greece, Spain, Italy and



Portugal have the lowest rates (from 18 to 36%). In candidate countries, values range from 11% in Romania and 28% in Bulgaria to 69% in the Czech Republic.

Figure 10. **Enterprises providing CVT as a percentage of all enterprises, 1999**



Source: Eurostat, CVTS2

Copied from Cedefop (2003): Key figures on vocational education and training. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003.

2.2.1 Proportion of enterprises providing CVT increases with size

Figure 11 explores the relationship between providing CVT and the size of the enterprise. In all countries, the percentages of enterprises offering CVT are higher in medium-sized than in small enterprises and higher still in large enterprises. In 16 of the 25 countries which took part in the survey, more than 90% of enterprises with 250 employees or more provide continuing training. In contrast, the values for small enterprises range from 8% in Romania to 95% in Denmark. These are the two countries at the opposite ends of the scale for providing CVT courses (see Figure 10). In 14 countries, the differences between medium-sized and large enterprises are small (from 0 to 12 percentage points). They are more marked in southern EU countries as well as Bulgaria and Hungary.

Figure 11. **Enterprises providing CVT as a percentage of all enterprises, by class size, 1999**

	EU 15	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	N	BG	CZ	EE	HU	LV	LT	PL	RO	SI
10-49 employees	56	66	95	71	11	31	70	75	20	67	85	68	17	78	88	85	84	24	62	58	32	49	37	36	8	35
50-249 employees	81	93	98	87	43	58	93	98	48	83	96	91	46	97	99	91	97	34	84	85	51	70	60	52	13	72
250 employees and more	96	100	100	98	78	86	98	100	81	99	98	96	78	99	99	98	100	62	96	96	79	91	80	63	38	96
Total	62	70	96	75	18	36	76	79	24	71	88	72	22	82	91	87	86	28	69	63	37	53	43	39	11	48

Source: Eurostat, CVTS2

Copied from Cedefop (2003): Key figures on vocational education and training. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003.

These data underline the need to pay special attention to Small and Medium sized enterprises.



2.2.2 Provision of CVT varies across enterprise sectors

As figure 12 illustrates, in all countries apart from Slovenia, the highest percentages of enterprises providing CVT are in the 'financial intermediation' branch (NACE J). (Denmark and Ireland have equally high figures in other sectors as well.) In general, 'real estate, renting and business activities' (NACE K) comes second both in the EU and candidate countries. The other sectors are placed lower. In candidate countries, the percentages recorded for 'wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods' (NACE G) are comparatively low. The widest discrepancies in the percentages of training enterprises by economic activity are found in Greece, Hungary, Italy and Portugal (over 40 or 50 percentage points) and, to a lesser extent, in Belgium, Ireland, Latvia and Slovenia (over 30 percentage points).

These figures are in line with the observation that incompany training is strong in the service business, partly because of the need to acquire ICT skills.

Figure 12. **Enterprises providing CVT as a percentage of all enterprises, by economic activity (NACE Rev. 1), 1999**

	EU 15	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	N	BG	CZ	EE	HU	LV	LT	PL	RO	SI
NACE D	56	68	95	73	17	38	77	90	23	75	90	73	19	77	90	86	85	29	70	60	34	53	41	35	12	53
NACE G	65	72	100	83	18	41	76	77	25	75	87	74	24	85	94	83	87	25	63	60	39	51	39	33	9	30
NACE J	91	100	100	100	66	74	88	90	71	89	97	97	67	100	100	94	98	47	89	89	79	84	69	61	27	66
NACE K	74	86	98	87	39	41	81	90	27	80	90	87	43	86	90	92	96	36	77	70	48	60	54	55	21	60
NACE O	70	75	100	89	12	33	80	58	14	80	88	79	29	93	100	89	92	24	70	49	35	60	42	46	12	69
OTHER	57	63	91	65	15	29	69	72	23	59	86	65	18	79	84	86	80	29	67	66	31	51	45	43	11	46
TOTAL	62	70	96	75	18	36	76	79	24	71	88	72	22	82	91	87	86	28	69	63	37	53	43	39	11	48

NACE D: Manufacturing

NACE G: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods

NACE J: Financial intermediation

NACE K: Real estate, renting and business activities

NACE O: Other community, social and personal service activities

Other Mining and quarrying; Electricity, gas, water;

(C, E, F, H, I) Construction; Hotels and restaurants; Transport, communication

Source: Eurostat, CVTS2

Copied from Cedefop (2003): *Key figures on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg:

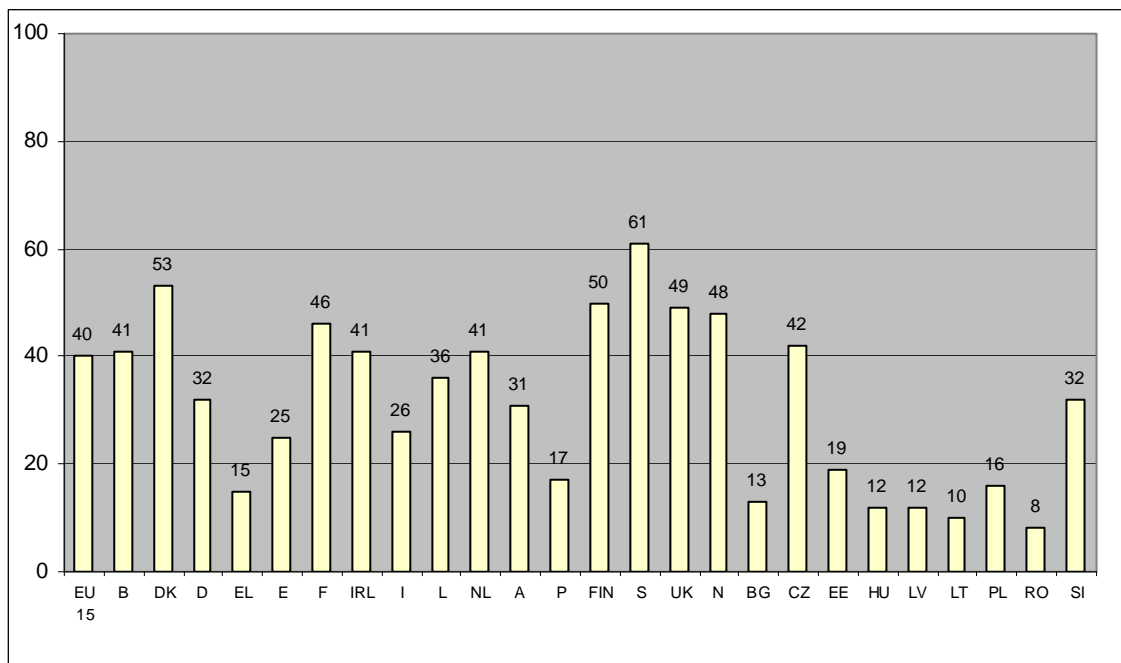
Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003.

2.2.3 Discrepancies in CVT participation across countries

As Figure 13 shows, the percentage of employees taking part in training in enterprises (40% on average) is considerably larger in EU Member States than in candidate countries. Among EU Member States, Denmark, Finland and Sweden are in the lead, with over 50% participation. In candidate countries, the Czech Republic has the highest percentage (42%). Greece and Portugal, for the EU, and Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, for the candidate countries, get the lowest proportions of employees taking part in CVT (around 15% for the EU and 10% for candidate countries).



Figure 13. Employees participating in CVT courses as a percentage of employees in all enterprises, 1999



Source: Eurostat, CVTS2

Copied from Cedefop (2003): Key figures on vocational education and training. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003.

2.2.4 European enterprises invest between 0.5% and 3.6% of labour costs in CVT courses

Total expenditure on CVT courses is the sum of direct costs, staff time costs and the balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other training arrangements. Total expenditure as a percentage of labour costs of all enterprises in 1999 ranges from 0.5% in Romania to 3.6% in the United Kingdom (Figure 15). Percentages are generally higher in the EU (2.3% on average) than in candidate countries. Direct costs of CVT courses as a percentage of labour costs vary between 0.3% in Romania and 2.8% in the United Kingdom.

Figure 15. Costs of CVT courses as a percentage of total labour costs of all enterprises, 1999

	EU 15	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	N	BG	CZ	EE	HU	LV	LT	PL	RO	SI
Direct costs	1,4	0,6	1,7	0,9	0,4	0,5	1,0	1,5	1,2	1,0	1,7	0,8	0,7	1,3	1,6	2,8	1,4	0,7	1,2	1,3	0,5	0,8	0,5	0,5	0,3	0,8
Labour costs of participants	0,8	0,9	1,4	0,7	0,5	0,9	1,2	1,0	0,6	1,0	1,1	0,5	0,6	1,1	1,3	0,8	0,9	0,3	0,7	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,5
TOTAL	2,3	1,6	3,0	1,5	0,9	1,5	2,4	2,4	1,7	1,9	2,8	1,3	1,2	2,4	2,8	3,6	2,3	1,0	1,9	1,8	1,2	1,1	0,8	0,8	0,5	1,3

Source: Eurostat, CVTS2

Copied from Cedefop (2003): Key figures on vocational education and training. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003.



3 Recent achievements of VET institutions

European institutions for vocational and technical education go through a constant process of restructuring and quality improvement. Typical issues have been:

- Larger scale of institutions in order to make Vocational Education and Training (VET) more cost-effective and allow a better fit to the diversity of students and societal demands;
- Professional management, including quality management;
- Development of qualification structures in the light of better connection of VET and work in business, government and industry; This includes recently addressing new and transferable skills to meet the demands of new occupational roles for the future;
- Efforts to ensure a minimum qualification and/or work for all young people, including re-engaging non-traditional learners;
- Efforts to implement ICT as part of working and learning environment.
- An increasing number of institutions are making efforts to ensure that people take responsibility for their own learning.

4 The transformation to Lifelong Learning

4.1 *The robust model of schooling*

4.1.1 Our schools are embedded in values of the 19th century

Educational systems are strongly embedded in history – more specifically in the period of industrialisation in the 19th and 20th century.

The industrialisation was rooted in a mechanical worldview (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) and characterised by a specific mode of organisation that is hierarchical, with increasing separation between thinking (management) and doing (labour); where material resources, capital and labour are the means of power and where time and task are important parameters for work. Work was analysed in detailed descriptions of separate functions and tasks. The actual execution of tasks was carefully planned, mediated and controlled. Specially assigned people, currently named as managers, did the thinking. Their number continuously increased and higher education was happy to ensure their supply.

This pattern of organising started in the economic system and in military technology. It was embraced by the state bureaucracy and the education system and finally reached the habits of everyday life. The term *industrial society* does therefore not just refer to a society where there is industry. Rather, it refers to a society where the social and technological forms of industrial organisation permeate all spheres of activity (Castells, 1996). Education is indeed an example of successful industrial mass production systems (Senge, 2000). The industrial character of schools has in fact been enforced by the need for an increasingly better qualified workforce and stable social conditions.

4.1.2 Education was rooted in a set of 19th century values. These values include (See VAN AALST (2002) for further substantiation of this paragraph):

- The industrial model of organising learning processes including standardisation, separation of thinking and doing.
- The dominant value of written expert knowledge, learned and assessed through language; Freedom through knowledge (Enlightenment)
- The bond between schooling and nation states

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- Meritocracy, leading to a dominant screening function of schooling.

These values are in fact in contrast with several characteristics of learning for a vocation and learning on the job, integration of thinking and acting. History shows that in many countries VET has been embedded in general educational structures.

4.1.3 Our schools have been highly effective

It has been argued that this set of principles has developed a system that has been highly effective during the past 150 years. It has indeed raised the educational level of the population and accommodated an enormous increase of participation.

4.1.4 However: there are limits to this growth and times have changed

Limits to growth include:

- Excessive amount of formal school-knowledge
- Internal rat-race to acquire an increasingly higher level, without improving relevant qualification
- The limits of meritocracy: meritocracy works well as long as the reservoir of hidden talent is available, with increasing levels of schooling: the reservoir dries up and meritocratic screening turns in its reverse: it produces school failure.

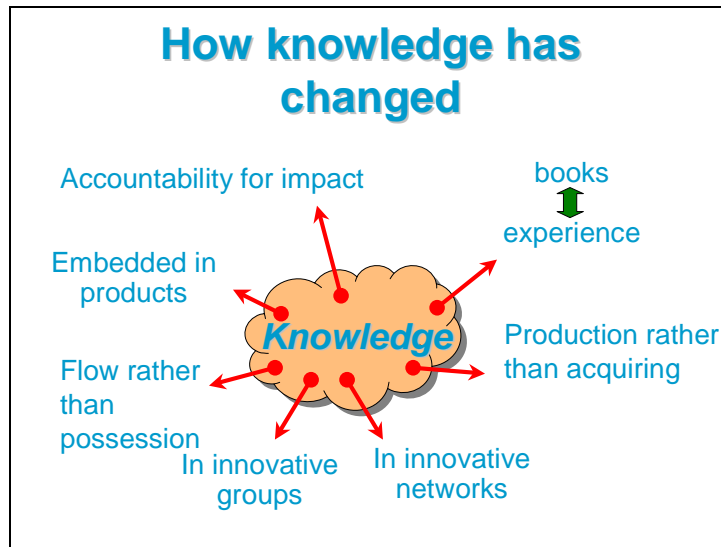
And times are changing:

- changes in the production, use and understanding of “Knowledge”
- changes in definitions of identity and social texture
- globalisation.

4.2 Times are changing

4.2.1 Knowledge

Changes in knowledge include a fundamentally different way of conceptual understanding of what knowledge is about, as well as different value positions about which kind of knowledge is seen as valuable. In short one can say that the production of knowledge has changed from the disciplinary organised way in Universities to a “transformational” mode, integrated in innovation of products and services and with different stakeholders and external accountability. This has been called “mode 2 knowledge production” (Gibbons et al, 1996). Furthermore, knowledge is now much more seen as a process between tacit and codified forms of knowledge, it is more “in the flow” than in the books, and it is not only seen as an individual asset, but more and more as an asset of groups and networks.



4.2.2 Social texture and identity

This refers to increasing flexibility in work, changing roles of woman, the emergence of social pressure groups (Castells), caring for environmental and social issues, changing patterns of personal responsibility, social care, social-emotional development and motivation and new patterns of personal autonomy and social bonds.

The issue of personal autonomy and new social bonds is sometimes framed as a trend to individualisation, immediately followed by the idea of what must be done to turn the trend e.g. by concepts of social cohesion. This is – in my view – not a very fruitful approach. We *want* increased autonomy and authenticity of human beings, it is a basic need of human development. So we have to find new definitions of autonomy. Taylor and Speck (between others) have shown that a new autonomy goes along with and is intimately related to new types of social bonds. So the trend to individualisation is not the opposite of social cohesion. Instead new social textures go along with a new definition of autonomy and authenticity.

4.2.3 Globalisation

Globalisation has been defined as a mix of several factors (Lubbers, 199?):

- a. worldwide systems of communication and exchange of information;
- b. worldwide economy;
- c. worldwide convergence towards a combination of democracy and regulated markets; traditional ideological boundaries between first, second and third world are disappearing.

Globalisation has a number of important consequences, which can be listed as follows.

- There is an increase of international tension, and thus an increase of international efforts to control these tensions.
- Insecurities of political governance. Democracies have been developed within the concept of the Nation-state. New global arrangements have to be developed, but are not yet readily available. The role of national governments with respect to education is less clear than in the past.
- By a strong emphasis on technological and economic issues, there is a certain risk that social and environmental issues are kept on the background. This leads to social pressure and

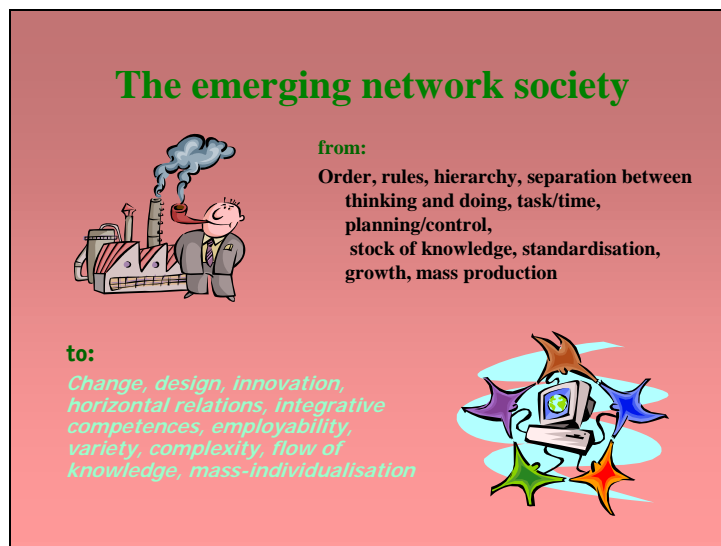


organisation of well organised pressure groups. This may be seen as valuable aspects of the development of a responsible civil society.

4.2.4 The network society

The three “mega trends” as indicated above are seen as indicators of a fundamental change in the model of development in European countries. This model has been named the informational mode of development or the move towards the network society (Castells).

This term “informational” does not (alone) refer to the introduction of computers and ICT, but refers to changing patterns of social organisation, changing values of knowledge and identity and different conceptions about states, state governance, universities and schooling. As compared to the earlier mentioned features of the industrial mode of development, the informational mode is characterised by variety; design and innovation; participation, complexity, flow of knowledge, mass individualisation, global institutions, regionalisation, communities of practice, etc.





5 Learning for the future of Europe

The emerging network society has drastic consequences for educational structures and practices. Learning of knowledge and skills needs to reflect the changed perception of knowledge, as illustrated before. The consequence is an increased role for informal and non-formal modes of learning and in fact an intertwining of traditional skills and personal and social abilities. The model of initial schooling, that is based on stable labour markets and meritocratic screening models needs to shift to Lifelong Learning.

5.1 *The wider concept of Human Capital*

Investment in human capital is now seen as central to the development of advanced economies and democratic societies. Human capital is defined as: *“The knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being”*. (OECD, 2001).

The Education Policy Analysis 2002 of the OECD has explored what Human Capital may mean in the modern economies. Basic capital – such as literacy, numeracy and workplace skills “account for less than half of the wage differences in OECD countries. Part of the remainder may be explained by a ‘wider’ form of human capital, defined as the characteristics that allow a person to build, manage and deploy his or her skills. These include the ability and motivation to learn, effective job search skills, and personal characteristics that help one work well, as well as the capacity to blend a successful life with a good career.

“it turns out that the economic returns to individuals from particular courses of education and training vary considerably among individuals. Prior ability and qualifications affect returns, and there is some evidence that, for this reason, enterprise training is concentrated on those who already have good initial levels of educational attainment, recognizing that qualifications may be used by employers as a screening device to identify those with training potential. Successful learning not only requires prior cognitive skills; it also requires the motivation to learn, and the capacity to direct one’s own learning, an understanding of how the qualification and associated skills can be applied, and knowledge of how to “sell” the skills to employers.” Individuals need to learn how to manage their long-term goals, both job-related and social, as well as acquiring specific skills for finding work. The development of these characteristics – such as the ability to plan and think ahead – will depend not only on early experience at home, but also on the active role of schools and colleges in nurturing these abilities. Career education and guidance can be central to this, and needs to support long-term learning strategies, and work with other influences, including those of family and peers.

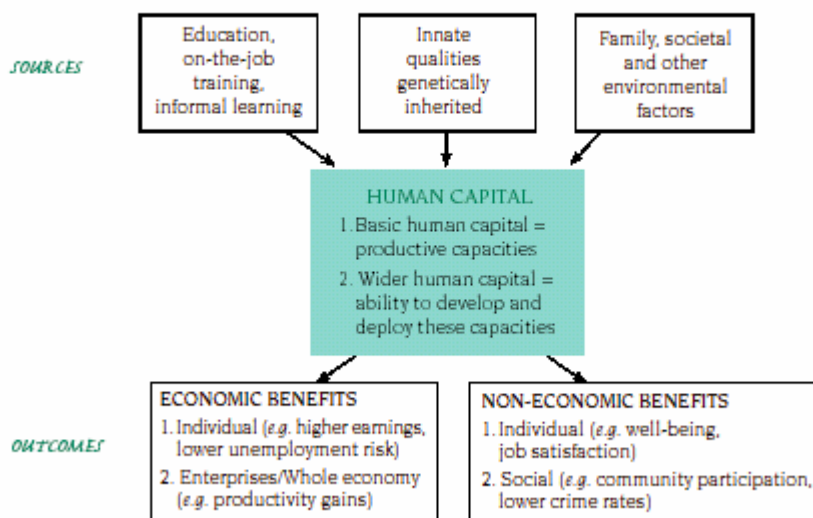
Within organisations, while technical skills may be acquired by formal training, identification of career-enhancing opportunities may depend much more on informational networking. In line with this view, a number of studies have shown that the acquisition of human capital is linked to access to social capital – in the sense of *informal networks of trusted social contacts*. Such access will depend on individual social skills, as well as the existence of networks.

Such “wider” forms of human capital facilitate efficient identification and acquisition of skills in short supply, and efficient use of existing skills. They therefore do more than just give individual advantage; they contribute to overall economic output, and overall well-being, by putting the right people with the right skills in the right place in the economy. The OECD suggests that the returns from such capacities may be very large.

The wider concept of human capital helps bridge the gap between those who emphasise education’s economic mission, and those who emphasise broader social and personal benefits.”



Figure 5.1 Human capital – sources, aspects and outcomes



- Source: OECD (2002) *Education policy Analysis 2002*. Chapter 5: Rethinking human capital OECD, Paris

A fuller conception of human capital could thus comprise:

Basic human capital

- Productive capacities and characteristics (like carpentry skills, physical strength, creativity, communication ability). These can be thought of as “skills”, broadly defined.

Wider human capital

- Characteristics that allow a person to build, manage and deploy basic human capital

These include:

- 1) The ability to acquire and develop skills. This includes the ability to learn, to identify one’s learning needs and to manage one’s learning activity.
- 2) The ability to find the best place to utilize these skills. This includes career planning, job search skills, and the ability to blend working and personal objectives
- 3) Personal characteristics (like trustworthiness) which make people more attractive as employees, because they are more likely to deploy their skills productively. Motivational characteristics are likely to be central

One motivational characteristic which may play a particularly important role is the willingness to trade current for future benefits – *future-directedness*.

- Source: OECD (2002) *Education policy Analysis 2002*. Chapter 5: Rethinking human capital OECD, Paris

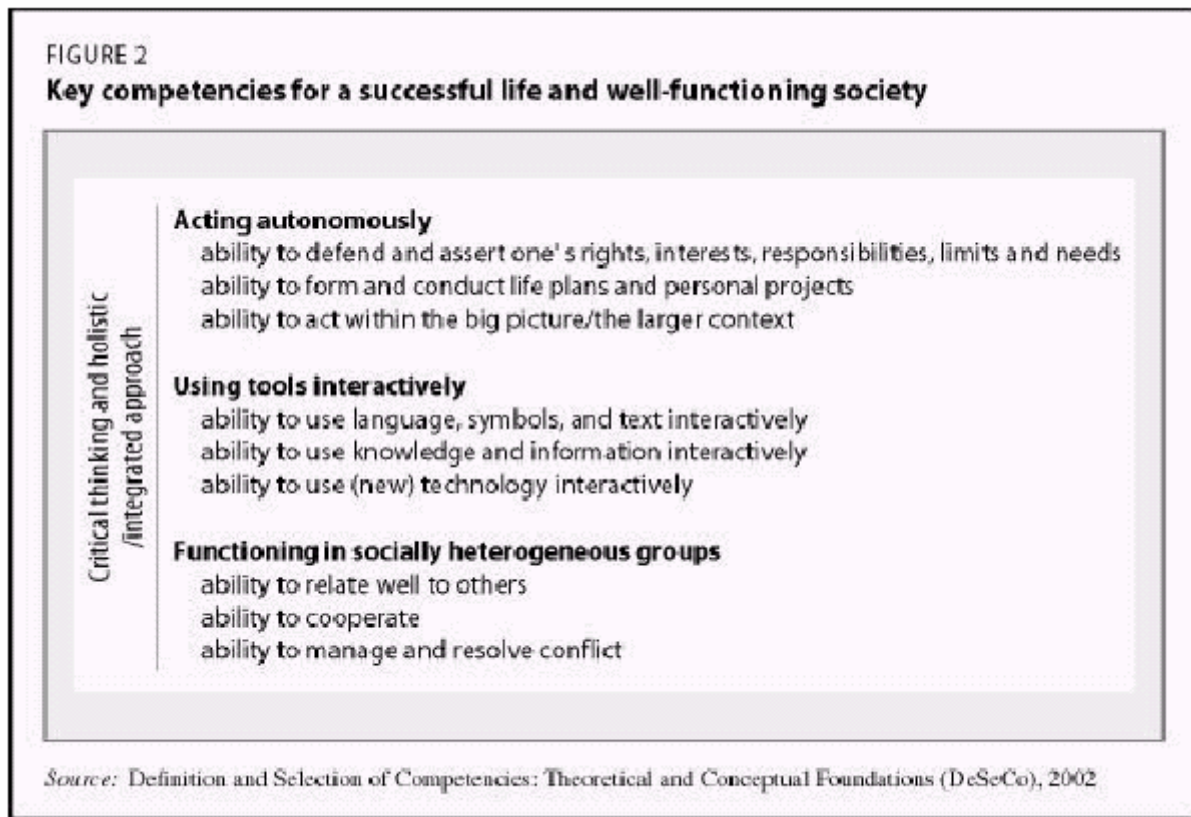
5.2 Key competencies for the knowledge society

The DeSeCo project (Definition and Selection of Competencies) suggests three key competencies for a successful life and well functioning society:

- Acting autonomously
- Using tools interactively
- Functioning in socially heterogeneous groups



A specification is given in the figure and in the appendix.

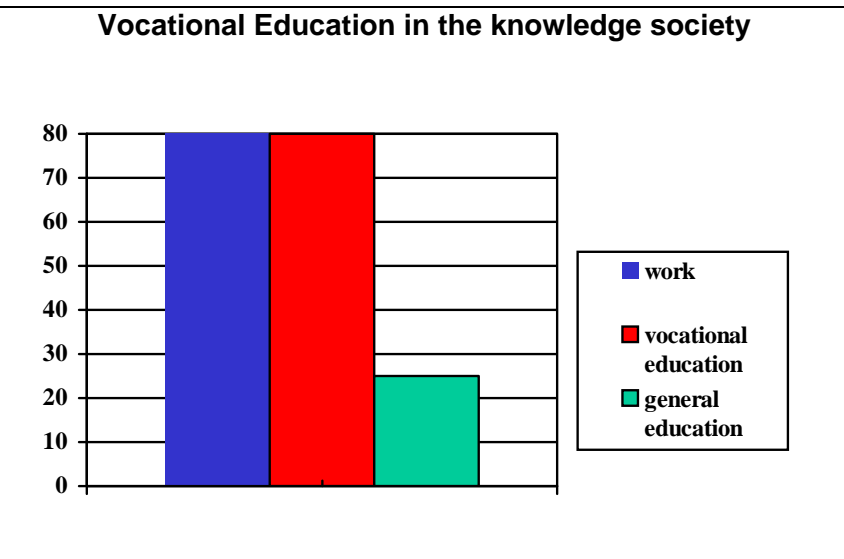
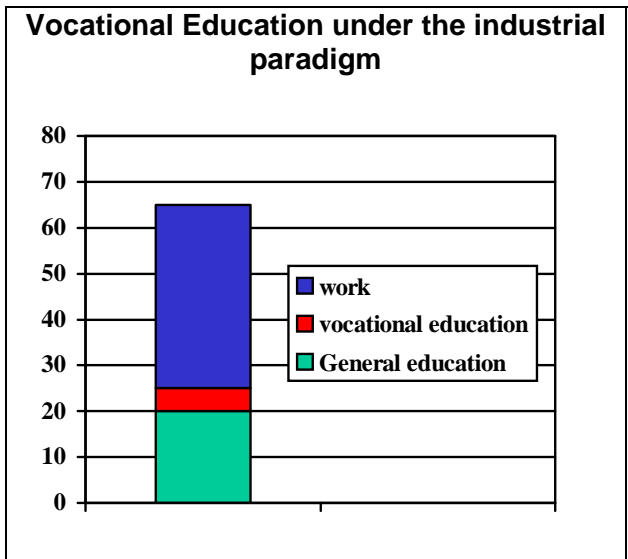
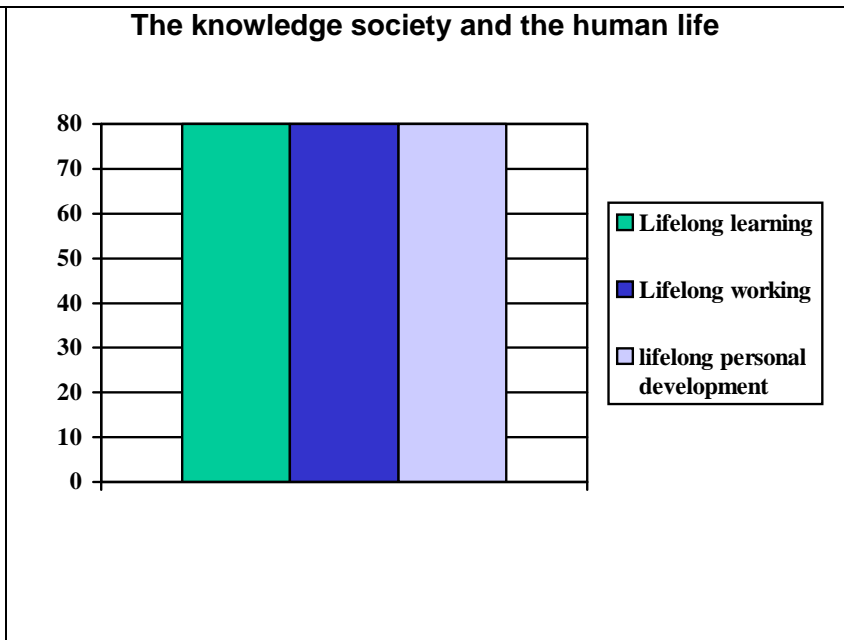
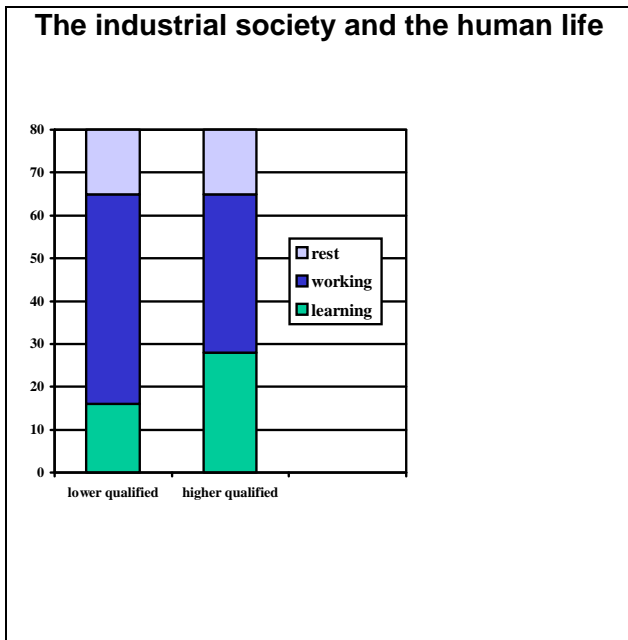


Source: DESECO (2002): Definition and selection of competencies: theoretical and conceptual foundations; Strategy paper on key competencies an overarching frame of reference for an assessment and research program; Revised draft- september 13, 2002; ines/smg/2002/2/2. Oecd, Paris.

5.3 Lifelong Learning

The overarching concept for new structures of learning is the concept of Lifelong Learning. (Commission of the European Community, 2001)

It can be visualised by the falling down of the educational column.



5.4 Conclusion: Vet is a modern type of education that is highly productive for economic, personal and social development in the knowledge society

If we look at the changes in knowledge, identity and social bonds, we can conclude that VET education - in the context of Lifelong Learning - is actually in a position that fits better to modern conditions than general education, that is still predominantly based on 19th century values.

As a very general statement: efficiency and effectiveness of education can be improved by investment in VET and increase of participation in VET – in a context of Lifelong Learning - in the broad sense of its delivery as indicated above.



6 The role of EfvET (together with EVTA)

6.1 EfvET: The learning platform

EfvET provides a network to assist VET managers and teachers in EU Countries and candidates countries to exchange, develop and disseminate best practices through:

- Annual European conference
- Website: <http://www.efvet.org>
- Newsletter
- Joint EU Projects
- Central office in Brussels
- Cooperation with CEDEFOP, to improve knowledge services to members and assist in knowledge generation.

6.2 EfvET: The voice of practitioners

EfvET - in close cooperation with EVTA - represents the voice of practitioners to European Commission and participates in working groups and consultations

6.3 EfvET: the channel to International cooperation

- EfvET is Partner of World Federation of Associations of Colleges and Polytechnics
- Cooperation with China through: Northern Jiaotong University – Beijing Electric Power College and Zhongtaiyihe Enterprises Consultancy

6.4 EfvET: learning and improving

- Partnerships
- Working groups
- Learning communities

6.5 Structure of EfvET

National board in each of the EU countries and affiliated countries

Steering Committee: one member from each National Board of EU Countries



RESOURCES:

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Appendix: The three Key competencies for the knowledge society

Acting autonomously

To act autonomously incorporates two central interrelated ideas: the development of personal identity, and the exercise of relative autonomy in the sense of deciding, choosing and acting in a given context. The concept concerns enabling and empowering individuals to develop and express a sense of self, exercise rights, and take responsibilities in the different spheres of life. The exercise of autonomy requires a general orientation toward the future, an awareness of one's environment and an understanding of it that includes how it functions and how one fits into it. Acting autonomously does not mean functioning in social isolation. Instead it means that individuals manage their lives in meaningful ways by exercising control over their living and working conditions and by playing an active part in making their own lives.

The following key competencies are relevant when it comes to acting autonomously:

👤 the ability to defend and assert one's rights, interests, responsibilities, limits and needs: This key competence empowers individuals to put themselves forward as a subject of whom account has to be taken and to make choices as a citizen, as a family member, as a worker, as a consumer and so on.

👤 the ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects:

This key competence enables individuals to conceptualize and actualize goals that make sense in their lives and are consistent with their values.

👤 the ability to act within the big picture/the larger context:

This key competence implies that individuals understand how the larger context functions, their position in it, the issues at stake, and the possible consequences of their actions and take these factors into account when they act.

Using tools interactively

The adverb "interactively" is important. To use a tool interactively and effectively assumes not only a familiarity with the tool itself but also an understanding of how the tool enables an individual to interact with the world. The word "tool" is used in the broadest sense of the term. It encompasses instruments that are relevant to meeting many important everyday and professional demands of modern society, including language, information and knowledge (including the content of the traditional school curriculum), as well as physical entities (such as computers and machines). A tool is not just a passive mediator but instrumental as part of an active dialogue between the individual and his or her environment. Underlying this is the idea that we encounter our world through our cognitive, social, and physical tools. These encounters shape how we make sense of the world and become competent in interaction with it, how we deal with transformation and change, and how we respond to new long-term challenges.

The following key competencies are relevant when it comes to using tools interactively:

👤 the ability to use language, symbols, and text interactively:

This key competence concerns the effective use of language and symbols in various forms and situations to achieve one's goals, to develop knowledge and potential. It allows individuals to make sense of the world and to participate in dialogues, and thus to interact effectively with their environment.

👤 the ability to use knowledge and information interactively:



This key competence concerns the effective use of information and knowledge. It enables individuals to manage knowledge and information and to use it as a basis for understanding options, forming opinions, making decisions, and taking actions.

📱 the ability to use (new) technology interactively:

This key competence concerns not only the technical skills required to use the technology in question – for example, a computer and its software – but an awareness of the new forms of interaction that are possible through the use of technology. This competence enables individuals to adapt their behavior in everyday life to this potential.

Functioning in socially heterogeneous groups

In this category the focus is on the interaction with the “other”, the different other. For material and psychological survival, for a sense of self, identity, and social meaning, human beings are dependent INES/SMG/2002/2/2 on ties to others throughout their lives. Living and participating in multicultural societies and coping with increasing individual and social diversity require the ability to join and function in socially heterogeneous groups. This category concerns the effective interaction with other individuals including those whose personalities and backgrounds are different from one’s own. It concerns the development of social bonds and coexistence with people who do not necessarily speak the same language (literally or metaphorically) or share the same memory and history. They may adhere to different cultural values or come from different socio-economic backgrounds. These interpersonal or social competencies are particularly relevant for creating social capital.

The following key competencies are relevant when it comes to interacting effectively with other people:

👤 the ability to relate well to others:

This key competence allows individuals to initiate, maintain, and manage personal relationships.

👥 the ability to cooperate:

This key competence enables individuals to work together towards a common goal.

🗨️ the ability to manage and resolve conflict:

This key competence implies that individuals accept conflict as an inherent aspect of human relationships and approach its management and resolution in a constructive manner.

Source: DESECO (2002): Definition and selection of competencies: theoretical and conceptual foundations; Strategy paper on key competencies an overarching frame of reference for an assessment and research program; Revised draft- september 13, 2002; ines/smg/2002/2/2. Oecd, Paris.