

# Forms of continuing training in the workplace: a result of social meanings?

A comparison between Austria and France

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**SUMMARY**

**Starting from the CVTS-2 survey in which responses by Austrian and French employers revealed their very limited use of 'non-school' types of training (on-the-job training, self-learning, job rotation, apprenticeship and quality circles, etc.), the author searches for the reasons for these two European exceptions. Although certain national institutional and structural characteristics common to both countries may explain this particular vision of continuing training, they only account for part of the similarities between Austria and France in terms of training practices. The cultural dimension therefore assumes an interest as a possible explanation for this behaviour. The assumption of a common social notion of training can therefore be advanced to explain the responses of employers in these two countries.**

Whether the issue is harmonisation, cooperation, comparison or more specifically the desire to develop a common benchmark, educational problems have been at the forefront of the European debate for several years. A special edition of the *European journal of vocational training* (No 32-2004) covered the history of vocational training in Europe, while Jourdan (2005) examined the institutional stages in 'the development of this Community policy from the Lisbon Council (2000) to Copenhagen (2002), Maastricht (2004) and shortly Helsinki (2006)' (page 167). These debates tend to focus particularly on [initial] vocational training, and to a much lesser extent on one other aspect of education, namely continuing training. Jourdan (*op.cit.*) has noted that one of the important issues covered in Helsinki in December 2006 concerns the project for a European professional certification framework for life-long learning, the main obstacle to which is the mutual recognition of skills and qualifications across the various Member States. The author's view is that it is vital to have common instruments if convergence is to be achieved. But having such instruments would imply that the different countries share a prior conception. This is, in fact, one of the first problems facing any attempt to set up a project of this sort. To show that social concepts determine training practices in European companies is the focal point of this paper, which takes its cue from the conclusions of Théry *et al.* (2002).

The authors observed that 'lifelong training remains to be developed', such is the astonishing diversity of continuing training practices. However, one of the observations which appears particularly enigmatic concerns the types of training which enterprises in the various countries claim to have used in their continuing training processes (otherwise referred to as 'lifelong learning'). Table 1 shows the percentage of companies in each country reporting the use of at least one type of training, broken down by the type of training.

**Table 1: Percentage of enterprises by country reporting the use of at least one type of training in 1999**

Country	Continuing training courses (1)	All other types of training	Gap between school and non school training	Country	Continuing training courses (1)	All other types of training	Gap between school and non school training
<b>Austria</b>	<b>71 %</b>	<b>27 %</b>	<b>44</b>	Italy	23 %	22 %	1
<b>France</b>	<b>71 %</b>	<b>41 %</b>	<b>30</b>	Germany	67 %	72 %	-5
Netherlands	82 %	70 %	12	Greece	9 %	15 %	-6
Norway	81 %	75 %	6	Great Britain	76 %	83 %	-7
Sweden	83 %	78 %	5	Portugal	11 %	20 %	-9
Finland	75 %	72 %	3	Ireland	56 %	75 %	-19
Denmark	88 %	87 %	1	Belgium	48 %	67 %	-19
Spain	28 %	27 %	1				

(1) See box for definitions.

Source: Eurostat CVTS-2 Survey

Continuing training practices in companies differ widely from one country to another. Those in southern European countries (Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece) are typified by a limited recourse to training. Responses from enterprises in those countries did not exceed a maximum of 36 % (Spain). Companies in northern Europe, by contrast, make a far higher use of training, from the lowest figures in Belgium, where 70 % of companies reported using at least one type of training, to the highest – Denmark – where the figure was 96 %.

The differing intensity in the use of training between these two groups of countries reveals different usages but also probably reflects different concepts of training. While the behaviour of Greek or Portuguese enterprises may be explained by the lower level of technical and technological sophistication of their production infrastructure – which is known to be a crucial factor in the use of training (Géhin, 1989; Margirier, 1991; Zamora, 2003) – the same cannot be said for either Spain or Italy. Thus, it is difficult to explain away the different training practices of companies by reference solely to this cause.

European companies also differ as regards the type of training. Table 1 shows three groups of countries which can be distinguished from one another: those in which training courses are overwhelmingly used (Austria, France and the Netherlands); those whose practices reveal a balanced use of both forms of training with a tendency to favour courses (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Spain and Italy); and lastly, countries in which the majority of enterprises place the emphasis on ‘other forms of training’ – such as Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Portugal, and to an even more marked extent Ireland and Belgium. These differences highlight the phenomena of the mutual substitutability

or complementarity of different types of training. Countries in the first and third group are in a process of substitutability, while the second group reflects complementarity. We should also note that this group comprises the Scandinavian countries, where adult education is particularly well developed, institutionalised and accessible to a large proportion of the population. Sweden is emblematic here, with an equal proportion of adults and students at university.

Among the countries where substitutability predominates, with courses tending to be the dominant medium, Austria and France display their own particular features. These two countries both show the widest gaps between the proportion of enterprises carrying out training through 'courses' (71 %) and those stating that they have undertaken 'other types' of training (27 % and 41 % respectively). These findings are surprising. How can we explain such wide differences? What are the features of these two countries that could explain the use of such a differentiated approach to continuing training compared with others countries?

To look for the reasons, we will follow the suggestions made by Greinert (2004), quoting Georg (1997) to explain the social differences in responses from enterprises concerning their continuing training practices. '*Georg believes that the model for explaining specific national differences in job training for the masses must be expanded to incorporate the constellations of the prevailing cultural and functional-structural relations within a society, that is culture and structure*' (Greinert, *op.cit.* p.20). Against this background, we shall look for common structural and cultural factors shared by Austria and France which could explain the particular preference of their companies for the 'course' approach to continuing training. The results will therefore be presented in two parts. In the first, supported by data from the CVTS-2 survey, we shall see that certain national institutional and structural specificities may explain the different forms of continuing training used. However, because this first aspect only takes a partial account of the similarities between Austria and France, we shall introduce the cultural dimension in the second part. Thus we shall look at these two countries in parallel, drawing the contrast with the other Member States insofar as they are relevant to the aspect being examined.

### **The CVTS-2 Survey**

Data used in this article are taken from the second European survey, CVTS-2, carried out at the initiative of Eurostat, the European statistics office. The survey looked at continuing training among company employees in 1999 financed either wholly or in part by their employer. It covers all EU Member States as well as the accession countries – almost 25 in total. In France, the survey was carried out by Céreq and DARES, the research, studies and statistics directorate of the Ministry of Labour.

CVTS-2 was based on a standardised questionnaire sent to private-sector companies with more than 10 staff, excluding the health and agriculture sectors. It enables an analysis to be made of the methods of continuing training used and provides quantitative information on trainees and numbers of training hours, as well as the content and cost of training.

The survey firstly covered 'courses' – i.e. training in which vocational teaching is delivered by teachers, tutors or lecturers, organised by the companies themselves or by an external supplier, lasting for a pre-defined period, and taking place outside the workplace. The survey also provides information on less formalised techniques such as self-learning, on-the-job training, instruction at conferences or seminars, job rotation or learning circles / quality circles. Here we shall refer to them as 'other forms of training' to distinguish them from training courses.

All the survey data and the calculations given here are available on the Eurostat website.

## **Institutional and structural factors which partly explain the preference for courses**

When looking at structural effects, we shall cover three points which appear to have influenced the responses of enterprises: the degree of institutional coercion exercised through the policy for financing continuing training, the size of the enterprise, and the opportunities available to enterprises nationally to outsource continuing training.

### **The importance of the degree of institutional coercion and its links with companies' responses: a relationship specific to France**

Institutional constraints could explain the differences between the types of training in the various European countries. Looking at the case of France, Cam et al. (1995) noted the importance of 'external demands' in the process of formalising training in companies. The authors argue that it is firstly the lack of a precise legal definition of training and secondly the fact that it is a legal obligation that explain why companies only use and report certain types of training. The result of this is an under- or over-emphasis on certain training types.

On this basis, we have suggested that the different ways of organising continuing training systems may reflect differing levels of coercion, which would lead to a greater or lesser degree of formalisation of training events. In other words, the greater the coercion, the more the training would be formalised, and hence the greater the positive gap between courses and other forms. As a result, Austria and France should be the countries where the method of organising continuing training is most coercive.

Data making it possible to characterise the type of organisation of continuing training systems is provided by Aventur and Möbus (1998, 1999) and Aventur et al. (1999). These authors believe there are four possible ways of organising continuing vocational training systems in European countries. The first is by obliging employers to provide the finance. This applies specifically to France and Greece. At the other end of the scale is the system of 'freedom of choice' for employers. This is the case in Germany, Finland, Sweden and Portugal. Between these two extremes are two other approaches, the first of which is closer to the 'freedom of choice' for employers. Here the State provides incentives for continuing training, such as tax benefits. This applies in Great Britain, Austria and Norway. The second intermediate type of organisation of continuing training is closer to the system in which employers are obliged to finance it. This is a system of 'limited constraints' imposed on employers through collective bargaining agreements. Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Ireland and Spain (tripartite agreements) use this approach. Table 2 cross-refers the types of organisation of training policy with the responses given on the forms of continuing training used.

**Table 2: Link between the degree of coercive financing of continuing training by enterprises and forms of continuing training used**

	<b>Obligation to finance</b>	<b>Limited constraints</b>	<b>Free choice with incentives</b>	<b>Freedom of choice</b>
Overwhelming predominance of courses	France	Netherlands	Austria	
Small differences between training types but a majority of courses		Denmark Spain Italy	Norway	Sweden Finland
Predominance of 'other types' of training	Greece	Ireland Belgium	Great Britain	Portugal Germany

As regards Austria, the relationship between the degree of coercion and the responses from enterprises is inconclusive, because this is a country where the financing and organisation of continuing training takes place in a system of 'free choice with incentives'. Conversely, the case of France appears to support the view that a relationship exists between the degree of coercion and the formalisation of training. The financing obligations imposed on French companies could have the result of skewing responses towards a particular form of continuing training. Verdier (1990) points out that the 1971 law is based on a highly formalised concept of continuing training: Training must be undertaken *'in accordance with a programme which, having been drawn up on the basis of pre-determined aims, sets out the educational and organisational tools to be used and defines a system to monitor the implementation of the programme and assess its results [...]'*; and the author concludes that *'the archetype is therefore the training course delivered outside the workplace'*. By contrast, however, other European countries do not support this view, with Belgium and Greece in particular being at the other end of the scale from the expected results. Thus, although the responses from French enterprises are influenced by their legal obligation (reiterated in the Law of May 2004), this argument is not transferable to other countries.

### **The effect of the size of the enterprise and opportunities for outsourcing**

Blumberger et al. (2000), referring specifically to Austria, provide an explanation for the approach to continuing training in that country: *'The importance of cooperation with adult education and training establishments in improving qualifications throughout the economy is clearly apparent if we bear in mind that out of the two million people employed by industrial and commercial enterprises, 52 % work in firms with fewer than 50 staff'* (p.78). The authors' conclusions highlight the cooperation between Austrian enterprises and adult training establishments, and offer an explanation for the overwhelming predominance of 'school' types of adult education over other possible forms. SMEs therefore have a particularly extensive and well-organised platform of training bodies available to them, which facilitates access by their staff to continuing training. This platform makes it easier to outsource continuing training and therefore encourages the use of training courses. We shall test this view as a possible explanation.

### **The SME effect: an argument with some validity for Austria**

One characteristic feature of Austria, according to Blumberger et al. (op. cit.) or Aventur and Möbus (op.cit.) is that its production infrastructure includes a large number of SMEs. Company size is one important factor in the intensity of training use, with a consistent parallel between the increase in training

events (of all types) and the size of the enterprise. That being the case, if Austria has a high percentage of SMEs, it should show a lower use of training than European countries with a higher proportion of large enterprises. The preferred explanation for this is that the structure of SMEs makes it harder for them to use formalised types of internal continuing training than for large enterprises. Table 3 shows the percentage of employees in enterprises of between 10 and 49 staff in 2002 in each European country.

Table 3: **Percentage of enterprises by country reporting the use of at least one type of training in 1999**

Country	All types of vocational training	Percentage of staff working in an SME <sup>(2)</sup> in 2002	Country	All types of vocational training	Percentage of staff working in an SME <sup>(2)</sup> in 2002
Great Britain	87 %	13 %	Belgium	70 %	29 %
Netherlands	88 %	17 %	Denmark	96 %	30 %
Ireland	79 %	18 %	Norway	86 %	31 %
Finland	82 %	22 %	Greece	18 %	32 %
<b>France</b>	<b>76 %</b>	<b>25 %</b>	Italy	24 %	34 %
Sweden	91 %	25 %	Spain	36 %	35 %
Germany	75 %	26 %	Portugal	22 %	41 %
<b>Austria</b>	<b>72 %</b>	<b>29 %</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>66 %</b>	<b>28 %</b>

Source: Eurostat

With 29 % of the active Austrian population working in an enterprise with fewer than 50 staff, this country is slightly above the European average. This could be one of the explanations for the preference for training courses in continuing training, although the proportions are not overwhelming. Conversely, this argument does not apply to France, where the proportion of SMEs is below the average for the countries presented here.

The argument that the size of enterprise has an effect on types of training therefore appears to work to a limited extent in the case of Austria, whereas it does not apply to the other European countries. The four countries leading this ranking are the southern Europeans, in which over 30 % of the active population are employed in SMEs. We have already noted that these countries make relatively scarce use of training in comparison to their European counterparts. If we leave these southern European countries aside, Austria is then in the leading group of countries in which a high percentage of

<sup>(2)</sup> Defined here as an enterprise with between 10 and 49 staff.

people are employed by SMEs and where, in parallel, extensive use is made of training. However, the fact that this group comprises Norway, Denmark and Belgium suggests that there is very little causal link between the size of the enterprise and the use of a particular type of training. Table 1 showed that Belgium had a difference (of -19 points) between 'school' and 'non-school' types of training, compared with 1 point for Denmark and 6 for Norway. As with the proposition of Blumberger et al. (op.cit.), the argument on the effect of the size of enterprises has to be linked to the outsourcing opportunities available to SMEs.

### **The outsourcing effect: a more conclusive reason for the French case**

We should bear in mind that the use of courses can be linked to the specific nature of bodies offering continuing training. The outsourcing of training would suggest an emphasis on a 'school' approach to continuing training (courses) because outsourcing would not apply to self-learning, on-the-job training or apprenticeships at the workplace – to name but three. On this basis, Table 4 shows the enterprises, by country, which used at least one training course in 1999. This form of company training is broken down into two types: in-house or external. The total is not 100 because companies may use both forms, as they are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Table 4: **Percentage of enterprises providing continuing vocational training (courses), by type of course and size of enterprise in 1999**

In-house courses			External courses		
Country	Percentage of all enterprises	Enterprises with staff of between 10 and 49	Country	Percentage of all enterprises	Enterprises with staff of between 10 and 49
Spain	33 %	25 %	Greece	76 %	66 %
Netherlands	32 %	26 %	Portugal	81 %	80 %
Belgium	42 %	38 %	Italy	85 %	83 %
Finland	47 %	41 %	Great Britain	89 %	87 %
<b>France</b>	<b>49 %</b>	<b>42 %</b>	Ireland	88 %	89 %
Denmark	55 %	47 %	Germany	91 %	90 %
Portugal	55 %	48 %	Sweden	91 %	90 %
Ireland	58 %	51 %	Spain	92 %	92 %
<b>Austria</b>	<b>57 %</b>	<b>52 %</b>	Norway	93 %	92 %
Germany	59 %	53 %	Belgium	93 %	93 %
Greece	60 %	54 %	Finland	95 %	93 %
Norway	60 %	55 %	<b>France</b>	<b>95 %</b>	<b>94 %</b>
Sweden	63 %	56 %	Denmark	95 %	95 %
Italy	64 %	60 %	<b>Austria</b>	<b>97 %</b>	<b>97 %</b>
Great Britain	68 %	62 %	Netherlands	97 %	97 %
<b>Average</b>	<b>53 %</b>	<b>47 %</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>91 %</b>	<b>89 %</b>

Source: Eurostat

Interpretation: Of Austrian enterprises providing training courses in 1999, 57 % said they delivered at least one in-house course.

This table shows that while undoubtedly a large proportion of Austrian enterprises said they had provided external courses, the figure did not differ significantly from the practice in other countries. Of the 15 countries, 10 had a percentage in excess of 91 % of enterprises. Thus it appears that, in Europe, when enterprises provide courses for their staff these are, in the vast majority of cases, delivered externally. The outsourcing indicated by the study previously cited would be encouraged by the organisation of training supply in Austria, but it is also the case in a large number of other countries. In that sense, we cannot point to it as a distinctive feature of Austria – particularly because Austrian enterprises are not distinguished by using small numbers of internal courses, which should be one of the consequences of outsourcing. It is even above the European average in this regard. That means that even if it is true that outsourcing is slightly more widespread than in other countries (apart from the Netherlands), in-house courses are also used by enterprises to an extent well above the European average (57 % for Austrian enterprises com-

pared with 53 % on average). Here, the size of the enterprise does not appear to be an obstacle because 52 % of SMEs said they had delivered at least one 'in-house course'.

French enterprises are not typified by higher levels of outsourcing (they are similar to their Austrian counterparts), but are notable for the low level of in-house training, a practice which is even more marked for SMEs. Thus, the assumption of greater use of training courses for continuing training as a result of the possibility (or necessity) of outsourcing appears a convincing argument in the case of French enterprises. An explanation which should have applied to Austria appears to work better in the case of France.

Thus structural factors common to Austria and France may account for the more intensive use of courses for continuing training. Some of these factors can apply to either country. We shall now turn to a more 'cultural' approach to assessing behaviour.

## An identical formal concept of education

Heikkinen (2004) correctly pointed to the need to have an historical and contextual approach to the understanding of social models of education in order to understand their contemporary workings. It is from these two points of view that we shall approach the cultural analysis. Once again, Austria and France will be examined separately.

### **Austrian 'formalism' in education as an explanation for its enterprises' preference for training courses**

Although continuing training is not strictly covered by the legislative framework, it has consistently been a source of interest to the various stakeholders on the Austrian public stage. This began with adult education at the start of the 19th century, under pressure from social groups such as the Church, employers' associations, unions and political parties – despite the fact that the Federal Constitution makes no explicit reference to adult training.

The whole of the Austrian system of continuing training is therefore focused on the notion of adult education, but also on the concept of a second chance, as expressly stated in the training system set up by the State. The avowed aim is the social promotion of the individual, which is achieved by obtaining qualifications confirming the level of attainment. This concept of education, at the heart of the organisation and construction of the training system, may have had such an impact on public attitudes that the term 'training' is instinctively associated with a specific, academically based approach, i.e. courses. In other words, one effect of the concept (and portrayal) of training is that a large part of training activities are not necessarily considered as training at all by

those concerned in Austrian society – or at least that a more formalised type of training is consistently preferred.

The hypothesis of an over-representation of course-based training is also found in the observations of the Austrian system by Bjørnåvold (Cedefop, 2000). Compared with other European countries, Austria is finding it difficult, in the author's view, to develop a real debate on the recognition of non-formal training. Among the reasons advanced for this, four appear to be fundamental: the place and the operation of the initial training system, which is highly formalised; a very marked specialisation effect, which is reflected in very narrow professional profiles; an extremely hierarchical system, in which 'capitalisable units' are unknown, which means that an incomplete training segment is not recognised; and finally, the specialised nature of the training system, which leads to 'professional lock-out', making horizontal or vertical transition particularly difficult.

Like the author, we can repeat the conclusions of the social partners' representatives (Mayer et al., 1999) and in particular those of the employers' representative who stated: *'I am sorry to have to say that we are highly formalistic and start from the belief that everything which is not certified has not been formally learnt and therefore does not exist'* (p. 67). The reasons why partial and informal skills are not recognised are to be found in the *'loftiness and legitimacy of the initial training system'* (p. 67). The conclusion of this work supports our theory, providing an explanation for the high level of use of training courses by Austrian enterprises. The organisation, legitimacy and 'loftiness' of the Austrian education system, and hence its formalism, extend beyond the frontiers of initial education and into continuing training. This is quite consistent with the figures on the practices of Austrian enterprises (who use a high proportion of in-house and external courses).

This formalisation has consequences for the way training is portrayed. Training practices are the product of a specific portrayal of training and, in return, contribute to the identification of a specific training type. If we apply this view to our argument, the formalisation of training (both initial and continuing) in Austria could lead to practices focused solely on formal training and eliminate any that do not have these characteristics. Statements made by enterprises could be the echo of a particular concept of training, a scholarly notion of education. Through habits developed as a result of a social conception, the training course is preferred to, for example, learning by experience. We shall now see a similar phenomenon in France.

### **Continuing training à la française: the heritage of a school-based concept of education**

Continuing training in France is based on the notion of social promotion and the idea of a 'second chance' (Dubar 2000, 1999a, etc.) as in the case of Austria. Work by Tanguy (2001) shows how continuing training has become '*publicly portrayed as a shared asset, because it is simultaneously a way of increasing professional adaptability (in the interests of the enterprise), a source of professional promotion and mobility (in the interests of the employee) and a way to boost the economy (in the national interest)*'. As the author points out, '*after a period of persuasion, the idea of training as synonymous with universal wellbeing finally gained acceptance*'. Work by Dubar (1999b) also supports this view, but adds that the French concept of training is still that of a model '*which systematically gives preference to initial training over continuing training, school training over other forms of learning and State action over specific social innovation*'.

If we define the 'school' model of education using the criteria of Fusulier and Maroy (1994) (based on a definition proposed by Perrenouf in 1990) as a didactic contract between a teacher and a learner, and a social practice distinct and separate from other social practices, we can show that once the French education system lost one of these characteristics, that branch of education was devalued in comparison with a 'purer' form. This applies specifically to vocational education and training.

In this part of the French education system, more or less close links have been developed between the educational and the professional spheres. Apprenticeships or sandwich courses, which are one component of this type of training, are based on placements in companies, contrary to the practices used in general education. In this case there is no distinction between the educational and the professional spheres. However, Gégine and Méhaut (1993) point out that in France the social and economic status of professional training has been heavily devalued: '*Policy was set on the negative basis of a failure in the 'long route'; the 'short route' made it very difficult for students to re-enter the long one; children from the upper social strata were hardly represented at all in these areas*'. They also emphasise that apprenticeships are relegated to certain business sectors (construction, catering, hairdressing, etc.) made up primarily of small enterprises. Apprenticeship appears as a '*minority and marginal option in a vocational training system dominated by the academic approach*', a view also supported in studies by Tanguy (1991) and Verdier (1997). Thus, once teaching in France broke away from its initial academic form it became a devalued part of the education system.

As in the case of Austria, there is a French notion of education that seeks to give preference to the academic form over all others. Thus, it is perfectly plausible that this particular portrayal should re-appear in post-school train-

ing practices. The fact that in these two countries enterprises give precedence to academic forms of education and training is linked equally to specific structural factors in each country (degrees of coercion, size of enterprises and opportunities for outsourcing) and to cultural factors common to both. The definition of education as a social characteristic is one of the factors which is not only most helpful in explaining the predominance of the training course, but which also strongly suggests that a principle of under-representation of the other forms may be at work. We therefore favour the idea that there is an academic portrayal of training which would tend to restrict the act of training to courses and nothing else, ignoring other approaches entirely. We shall see that once the questions asked about post-school education practice widen the training spectrum, the number of responses referring to 'other forms' also increases.

### **Responses proportionate to the breadth of the concept of training**

It is interesting to compare four different surveys into training practices as this shows that the wider the definition of training used, the more the surveys report non-academic training practices. Judging by the responses to FQP93<sup>(3)</sup>, non-academic training types do not exist, because the survey does not enquire about them. However, in 'Formation Continue' 2000<sup>(4)</sup>, 19.4 % of those receiving training responded that they had received on-the-job training<sup>(5)</sup> while 5.5 % had undertaken self-learning, giving a total of 24.9 % in the period from January 1999 to March 2000. Compared with the first survey, almost 25 % of training had 'appeared'. The CVTS-2 survey reveals that 41 % of French enterprises claim to have used at least one 'other type of training' in 1999. Finally, the Eurostat Lifelong Learning 2003 survey distinguished informal training<sup>(6)</sup> from other types, revealing that 53.8 % of French employees said they had experienced at least one type of informal training in 2003. Clearly it is difficult to compare these surveys because they did not cover the same populations; however, it is clear that, at similar points in time, the use of a broader definition of training in the questionnaires revealed the existence of a wider range of training practices.

What applies to France also applies to Austria, because (once again according to 'Lifelong Learning 2003') 82.2 % of Austrian employees said they had undertaken informal training during that period. A few years earlier, em-

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(3) Enquête Formation Qualification Professionnelle / Training Professional Qualification Survey 1993.

(4) FC 2000 is a complementary survey to the employment survey which specifically tries to give an insight into employees' continuing training in France.

(5) Training in the workplace.

(6) Apprenticeship based on fortuitous circumstances or linked to everyday activities.

employers had reported that in 27 % of cases they had delivered 'other types of training' rather than course-based training in 1999.

Thus, basing our thinking on this approach according to social definition, we can put forward a possible explanation of the differences in responses by employers (CVTS-2) and employees (Lifelong Learning 2003). It could be due to a failure to expand the training spectrum in the CVTS-2 survey, and to the fact that a sector of the population was consulted (employers) whose concept of continuing training is often limited to a 'formal' one – two parameters which did not apply with the employees in 'Lifelong Learning 2003'.

Finally, we could suggest that future surveys into the training practices of employers could benefit if the spectrum of training was widened, as it was for employees in 'Lifelong Learning 2003'. Only then would we be able to assess any discrepancy between the responses of employers and those of employees. That would also allow for an unquestionably more precise measurement of the different concepts of training. Like Jourdan (*op.cit.*), who recommends the establishment of a common skills benchmark in European Community Member States, we could argue in favour of a common benchmark for training types to be used in surveys covering these areas.

We could not end without pointing out the limitations of a quantitative approach as set out above. The use – a fairly traditional one in our view – of more qualitative approaches appears to be necessary. There is no doubt that surveys by interview give interviewees the opportunity to introduce wider definitions of training, and also allow a comparison of different notions of training between the various groups within the enterprise. Different concepts could therefore explain the lack of 'inclination' shown by certain employees to take up the training opportunities offered by their employers.

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