

Rethinking Education and Training: Issues of Diversity, Transferability and Progression

Dr Mike Coles

Hong Kong

26 November 2014

Food for thought

1. Lifelong learning - evidence of change over 10 years
2. The collective view of the need for reform in European countries
3. Lifelong learning is only part of the picture – lifelong recognition matters too

Point 1: Progress over 10 years

Lifelong learning – what is it?

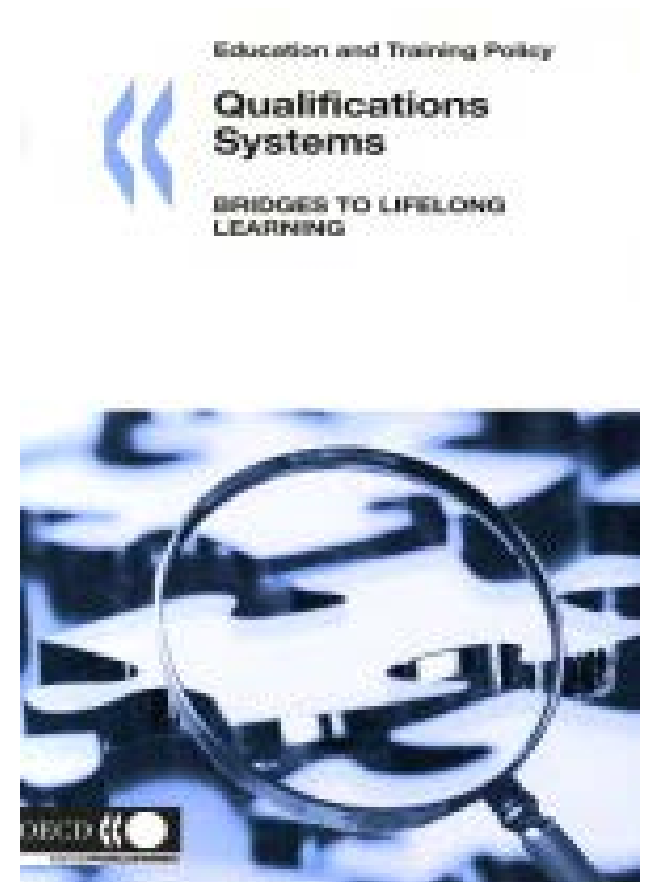
- Concerned with permeability of education and training systems, vertical or horizontal progression (no dead ends).
- Enhanced participation, stimulating demand and ensuring provision is adapted to the needs of individuals and other users of qualifications (more learning).
- Impact on how learning is delivered and raising the demand for recognition and for more flexible validation and certification systems (lifelong recognition).

4 year OECD study

23 countries across the world

Reported in:

Qualifications Systems: Bridges to lifelong learning



Pressures for change

- Broad economic pressures (discrepancy between job training and qualifications, human capital for economic growth, innovation...)
- International pressures (PISA/PIAAC, EU: recognition for labour mobility)
- Pressure to harmonise (QF development, European credit, European sector frameworks, international benchmarks/standards)
- Demographic pressures (ageing, immigration)
- Social and cultural pressures
- Pressure to improve communication and coherence (transparency...)
- Pressure from technological change (using opportunities created by the new technologies)

Mechanisms (1)

1. Communicating returns to learning for qualification
2. Developing employability
3. Establishing qualifications frameworks
4. Increasing learner choice in qualifications
5. Clarifying learning pathways
6. Providing credit transfer
7. Increasing flexibility in learning programmes
8. Creating new routes to qualifications
9. Lowering cost of qualification
10. Recognising non-formal and informal learning

Mechanisms (2)

11. Monitoring the qualifications system
12. Optimising stakeholder involvement
13. Improving needs analysis methods
14. Improving qualification use in recruitment
15. Ensuring qualifications are portable
16. Investing in pedagogical innovation
17. Expressing qualifications as learning outcomes
18. Improving co-ordination in the qualifications system
19. Optimising quality assurance
20. Improving information and guidance about qualifications systems

Powerful mechanisms

Wide applicability to Policy Responses

- Provide credit transfer
- Optimise stakeholder involvement
- Set up systems to recognise non-formal and informal learning
- Establish qualifications frameworks
- Provide new routes to qualifications.

Change mechanisms

- Communicating returns to learning for qualifications.
- Establishing qualifications frameworks
- Investing in pedagogical innovation

Point 2: European priorities

- The single labour market
- Subsidiarity and the need for collective agreements
- Recognition arrangements
- Tools for better education, training and qualifications
- Responding to crisis

Policy context

Europe 2020 Strategy

- Education & Training 2020; "Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training"
- A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 strategy
- European Employment Strategy / Agenda for new skills and jobs
- Modernising Higher Education
- Bologna process

Bruges Communiqué 2012

- **Attractive and inclusive VET** with highly qualified teachers and trainers, innovative learning methods, high-quality infrastructure and facilities, a high labour market relevance, and pathways to further education and training
- **High quality initial VET** which learners, parents and society at large may regard as an appealing option, of the same value as general education. It should equip learners with both key competences and specific vocational skills;
- **Easily accessible and career-oriented continuing VET** for employees, employers, independent entrepreneurs and unemployed people, which facilitates both competence development and career changes;
- **Flexible systems of VET, based on a learning outcomes approach**, which support flexible learning pathways, which allow permeability between the different parts of education and training and which cater for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, including competences acquired in the workplace;
- **A European education and training area**, with transparent qualifications systems which enable the transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes, as well as the recognition of qualifications and competences, and which facilitate transnational mobility and substantially increased opportunities for transnational mobility of VET students and VET professionals;
- **Easily accessible and high-quality lifelong information, guidance and counselling services**, which form a coherent network and which enable European citizens to take sound decisions and to manage their learning and professional careers beyond traditional gender profiles.

Education 2020 Priorities

- [Adult participation in lifelong learning](#)
- Low achievers in basic skills
- Tertiary level attainment
- Early leavers from education and training
- Early childhood education
- Mobility
- Employability
- Language learning

New Skills for New Jobs

- Enhancing lifelong education and training
- Skills needs analysis
- Acting on mismatches
- Mobilising resources

Rethinking education

Promote excellence in vocational education and training (VET). Enabling permeability with other educational routes, developing short cycle tertiary qualifications focused on identified areas of skills shortage

Improve the performance of student groups with high risk of early school leaving and low basic skills. Reinforcing the learning of basic skills such as literacy, providing individualised support

Strengthen the provision of transversal skills that increase employability (entrepreneurial initiative, digital skills and foreign languages). Introduce transversal skills across all curricula, design assessment tools so that competence can be assessed and evaluated, at least one entrepreneurial experience in compulsory education

Reduce the number of low-skilled adults. Increasing incentives for adult training by companies, validating skills and competences acquired outside formal education, and setting up one-stop shops that integrate different lifelong learning services

Scale up the use of ICT-supported learning and access to high quality OER. Modernising the ICT infrastructure and ICT-based teaching and assessment practices

Strengthen the professional profile of all teaching professions. Reviewing Initial Teacher Education, introducing adequately resourced systems for recruitment, selection, induction and professional development of teaching staff

Fundamentals that underpin EU tools

- Lifelong learning
- Mobility
- Transparency
- Permeability
- Quality assurance
- Learning outcomes

Point 3: lifelong recognition

- The key role of learning outcomes (curriculum, assessment and qualifications)
- Validation and credit (learning, assessment, validation and reporting)
- The need for new ways of recognising breadth of experience and learning – Representation
- Qualifications frameworks - supporting coordinated national policy, engagement of stakeholders, quality assurance, better qualifications, validation and credit, more flexible learning careers, international benchmarking,

The purposes of qualifications frameworks

- Organising education and training
- Bringing coherence to qualification design
- Creating a coherent view of qualifications
- Making the qualification system transparent
- Supporting lifelong learning
- Shifting the focus from inputs to outcomes
- Promoting competence based learning and assessment
- Enhancing progression, making learning pathways clear (removing dead ends)
- Creating better access to qualifications
- Facilitating better linkage between qualification and the labour market
- Promoting the status of VET
- Helping with employee recognition and employer recruitment
- Improving linkage between different sectors of education
- Providing a forum for stakeholder engagement
- Improving the quality of qualifications
- Improving the quality of education and training
- Adding value to qualifications
- Creating a basis for credit and credit transfer
- Creating a basis for validating learning gained outside formal education and training programmes
- Enabling linkage to a regional framework
- International benchmarking
- Supporting a wider reform agenda

More difficult areas for discussion

- Institutional frameworks, governance arrangements, responsiveness
- School qualifications: extent of formal assessment, over regulation, validation of experience
- Learning pathways, access, exemption, mapping of competencies
- Professional or private VET qualifications (standards, based on proof of competency, quality assurance, wage bargaining)
- Higher vocational qualifications (proof of competency, equivalence to academic qualifications and programmes, quality assurance, autonomy)
- Validation of non formal and informal learning (cost, quality assurance, basis in standards, currency)
- International qualifications from sectors and professional bodies, international companies (quality assurance, benchmarking, endorsement and status)

What should be our focus?

- Valuing learning from any source
- Transparency of opportunities for learning and qualification
- Representation of competencies and experience
- Information, advice and guidance