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A European Comparison of Controlling in Corporate Continuing Training

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publication
Secretary-general • Bonn

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A European Comparison of Controlling in Corporate Continuing Training
Ed.: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, Secretary-general, Bonn. Elisabeth M. Krekel ...
– Bielefeld: Bertelsmann, 2001

ISBN 3-7639-0947-8

Distributed by W. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH & Co. KG
PO Box 10 06 33, 33506 Bielefeld
Phone: (05 21) 9 11 01 11
Fax: (05 21) 9 11 01 19
E-Mail: bestellung@wbv.de
Order no.: 110.393

Edited by: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung,
Secretary-general, 53043 Bonn
Internet: www.bibb.de
E-Mail: zentrale@bibb.de

Layout: Hoch Drei, Berlin
Printed by: Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, Bonn
Published by: W. Bertelsmann Verlag, Bielefeld
Printed in Germany

ISBN 3-7639-0947-8

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Contents

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1. Training Control: Background, Importance and Definition

Knowledge, at the beginning of the 21st century, is seen apart from the classical factors of land, labour and capital, as the central factor of production. (Stewart 1998). Therefore, education, and in particular vocational training, acquires an importance which towers above anything subscribed to it previously. The philosopher Karl R. Popper underlined the importance of education in the following way in an interview he gave shortly before his death: *"(...) Our first duty is to peace. The second is to make sure that nobody goes hungry and the third is to achieve adequate full employment. The fourth duty of course is to education".* (Interview 29th July 1994, quoted according to Giarini/Liedke 1998.)

Even the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 1998) and the European Commission (1995) continually stress in their relevant publications that knowledge and competence are an essential prerequisite for securing the livelihoods and for the development of individuals, companies and countries to an equal extent, both today and for the foreseeable future. Investment in buildings, machines, materials or in IT is only worthwhile if the employees are able to handle them properly and can use them in a targeted fashion. The extent and quality of the available qualifications and competencies, however, often constitute a limiting factor. It is, therefore, undisputed in science, company life and education policy that the potential of human capital is the decisive factor today for the competitiveness and development of a dynamic, promising and innovative economy. The improvement of human capital, that is, the capabilities, skills and competencies as well as the motivations of the labour force is in all of our interests.

Against this background, investments in human capital form an essential basis upon which to secure the economic success of companies, in both domestic and international markets. Continuing vocational training and development of skills play an important role in coping with reorientation and adaptations to the rapidly changing work requirements as well as in the implementation of strategic corporate objectives. The success of corporate training measures depends, however, on whether the necessary training and qualification are developed and implemented to conform with the corporate objectives and processes. Many companies in Europe have a problem with this. They search intensively for new processes which they can use to help them systematically plan, control and implement their corporate training measures.

The way in which companies deal with these challenges, prepare their personnelfor future qualification requirements and the measures and instruments that they employ to effectively control their training activities was the subject of the research project *"Controlling in der betrieblichen Weiterbildung im europäischen Vergleich" ("A European Comparison of Controlling in Corporate Continuing Training")*, which was carried out with financial support from the European Community's Leonardo da Vinci Programme. Taking part in the project were the Netherlands, represented by ITS (wetenschap voor beleid en samenleving), Austria, represented by the PersonalentwicklungsGmbH (PEF Consulting) and Germany, represented by the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB) (Federal Institute for Vocational Training). The mutual research questions of the project were orientated towards the following objective of the European Union's Leonardo Programme: *"The promotion of co-operation with respect to qualification requirements and training needs and the promotion of the acquisition and transparency of qualifications as well as of the understanding of the key competence which is important for the technical development and the functioning of the single market (including the free movement of goods, services, people and capital), for the competitiveness of companies and for the needs of the job market."* Requirements from general objective no. 5 *("Material and occupation-specific investment should be treated the same way")* from the EUROPEAN COMMISSION (1995) white paper were also included in the investigations when conducting the research project. At the centre of the analysis is *"the importance of occupation-specific investment for competitiveness and suitability for employment".* (See EUROPEAN COMMISSION 1995, p. 75.)[1]

Training control is an instrument for optimising the planning, control and implementation of corporate continuing training. It is oriented to the individual phases of the entire training process and extends from the establishing of the continuing training requirement, the determining of the objectives of the continuing training, and the conception, planning and implementation of training measures through to success control and the securing of the transfer into the field of work. The training activities are in so doing not only looked at from pedagogical points of view but are also checked and assessed in accordance with economic criteria. Questions regarding efficiency and effectiveness and regarding the benefit of continuing training are therefore of central importance.

Many companies are only prepared to invest in continuing training and skills development when the effectiveness of these is clear. The people responsible for training are therefore increasingly put under pressure not only to prove the cost of corporate training measures but also to make statements about the benefits. They expect support from controlling,

1 The project *"Controlling in der betrieblichen Weiterbildung im europäischen Vergleich" ("A European Comparison of Controlling in Corporate Continuing Training")* is assigned to Section III.2.a. "Survey and Analysis in the Field of Vocational Training" of the Leonardo Invitation to Tender in European Communities Gazette C no. 372 from 9th December 1997. It is registered at the European Commission in Brussels under the number D/98/2/05059/EA/III.2.a/FPC.

which has been widely used for some time as a type of early warning system for controlling and guiding as well as optimising planning and development processes in the production area. In the last few years, controlling activities have also caught on more and more in other divisions such as in sales, marketing, and purchasing. The task of controlling is generally considered to be to show the economic situation of a company and its foreseeable development, to develop strategies to reach targets and to demonstrate the causes of negative developments and the possibilities available for avoiding them (FALK 2000, p. 503). With respect to the corporate field of training, it is the job of controlling in corporate continuing training and skills development to improve planning, control and implementation of the corporate training processes.

In literature, training control is described as a cyclical interlocking of planning, measurement, assessment and correction of the training processes. Corporate practice increasingly makes use of training control as an instrument which makes training processes more transparent. Training control is a method which is used in close co-operation with the company processes and which, by the linking of pedagogic and business objectives, improves the effectiveness and efficiency of training activities. It supports the intertwining of corporate training with other corporate functions (FALK 2000, p. 504), in particular the management of the business. Finally, it is the objective of training control to make the benefits of corporate training measures as measurable as possible. A condition for this is transparent objectives, processes and control mechanisms.

In all three of the countries featured, Austria, the Netherlands and Germany, an increasing number of companies of various sizes and from various industries are searching for methods and instruments which will enable effective and efficient structuring and help assess the benefit of their training processes. This development is not always, but often, termed training control.

Controlling is currently an important subject in corporate training departments in Austria. Many companies are using training control to search above all for clear connections between the corporate results and the continuing training and personnel development efforts. (See also KAILER/EDER/MAYRHOFER 2000.)

In the Netherlands, a variety of controlling elements are employed for the planning and control of qualification activities, in particular to verify the effects of qualification efforts. This finds expression, for example, in the debate on the benefit and the measuring of the benefit of qualification activities. The term training control itself is, however, still hardly used. (See also FRIETMAN/DEN BOER/KRAAYVANGER 2000.)

In Germany, companies assume an increasing importance of training control. The increasing interest in training control is closely connected here with demand-

oriented continuing training in companies. The aim is to gear training measures more clearly towards corporate objectives than has previously been the case in order to develop the qualifications early on which will be needed for future processes in the areas of production and services. In this context, companies are also looking for opportunities to prove the benefit and effectiveness of training activities. (See also BEICHT/KREKEL 1999; HERGET/BEICHT 2000.)

The respective status quo and the developments specific to each country with respect to training control were taken up within the framework of this project and explored in detail. In order to do so, the following aspects were dealt with in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany:

- importance of training control in corporate continuing training, competence and personnel development;
- methods and instruments for improving training activities and for reaching targets;
- requirements and processes for optimising corporate training activities and proof of efficiency.

Comparable statistical data was collected in a written survey in all three countries for the planning and control of qualification activities as well as for the basic corporate conditions for qualifying and continuing training. The companies were asked in particular about determining corporate qualification needs, structuring training activities, success control, means they use to ensure appliance and about the importance of controlling and benchmarking in corporate continuing training. The results of this survey and the comparisons between the individual countries are shown in detail in Chapter 3.

Apart from the data on quantitative development of corporate continuing training, examples of the structuring and the process of qualification activities in individual companies are documented using case studies.[2] Controlling in corporate continuing training is imbedded into the total concept of continuing training. To give a better understanding of the different backgrounds, continuing training in the individual countries is covered in Chapter 2.

2 These case studies are documented in the German edition. See also: Elisabeth M. KREKEL, Richard von BARDELEBEN, Ursula BEICHT, Jos FRIETMAN, Geert KRAAYVANGER, Johanna MAYRHOFER: Controlling in der betrieblichen Weiterbildung im europäischen Vergleich. Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (Federal Institute for Vocational Training) (Publisher). Bielefeld: Bertelsmann, 2001.

2. The Status of Continuing Training in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany

JOHANNA MAYRHOFER

2.1 Continuing Training in Austria

At present, it is not only in Austria that we see companies confronted with rapid technological developments and reduced product lifecycles. Due to increasing interweaving and globalisation, sales markets are becoming complex and complicated. Co-operation and competition no longer take place on a national level but on an international level. New production requirements and transformed markets require different social and work organisation structures in companies. The orientation to external and in-company customers is not only a basic requirement for success in the service sector. Radical demographic changes require a new association with people as a resource.

These integral changes (important for the organisation of work as well as technically and socially) require new business strategies and an accompanying development of skills on an employee and company level.

"Human capital" is increasingly considered to be a central factor of success and competitiveness for corporations. Qualifications gained in an education phase before starting work as well as purely reactive, off-the-job training schemes are by far no longer sufficient. This presents corporate continuing training with new and considerable challenges. Companies have to create an internal culture of learning and development, promote the readiness to learn in employees and executives and also look after the creation, maintenance and promotion of available employee potential in a purposeful way.

Personnel development and continuing training as it can be understood in a broader sense (see NEUBERGER 1994) is a key function in the successful managing of corporate innovations and complex environmental dynamics. Comprehensive corporate skills development also requires, however, adequate conceptional structuring of development measures. (See also QUEM 1995; ERPENBECK/HEYSE 1996; STAUDT et al. 1997.)

THOM (1987) already considered personnel development to include *job-related* measures which prepare employees and executives for special activities and functions in the company in addition to *training-related* measures such as vocational training, continuing training, retraining and trainee programmes. Different types of learning which are close to the job are often used here (e.g. career planning, job-rotation, representative regulations). The third essential element of personnel

development are the *informative fundamentals* (training statistics, information on employees, organisational units and relevant markets) which serve as a basis for controlling and deciding.

The detectable *expansion of terminology* in specialist literature (THOM 1987; LASKE 1990; STIEFEL 1991, 1996) but also in corporate practice in the last few years (see also KAILER 1995; STIEGER 1996, 1997; BIEHAL et al. 1998) results in an understanding of personnel development and continuing training which exceeds seminars and courses by far and also contains more and more alternative **forms of study**. The *structuring of work situations which promote learning* (e.g. job-rotation, on-the-job programmes) and an increase in the number of measures for *self-led learning* (e.g. going to specialised trade fairs, self-learning documents and learning with the benefit of *new learning technologies* such as computer-based training) are prominent developments here. *On-the-job training* is mentioned clearly more often today than participation in external or in-company seminars (KAILER et al. 1999). The increase in the importance of non-seminar-based development schemes is particularly apparent in *programmes to promote up-and-coming executives* where project work, employment of representatives, coaching, job-rotation and trainee programmes are already used very often.

Corporate continuing training — which in practice has so far often constituted the most important sub-category of personnel training (see KAILER 1991) — has also undergone a marked change in importance and structure. Corporate training activities, for example, are now understood as a *company investment* in its employees (see GAUGLER 1989) and are incorporated into the total performance process of the company (see MÜLLER-MERBACH 1991). Accordingly, efforts to achieve strategic alignment and control of personnel development and continuing training (*personnel development controlling*) gain more and more importance. (See also EDER/KAILER/MAYRHOFER, 2000.)

The **subject areas** of corporate continuing training in Austria differ in their emphasis between the corporate target groups (only roughly categorised in this case into executives and employees) and in their dependency on the company's size.

As studies show (e.g. KAILER 1988, 1991, 1995; KAILER et al. 1999), the subject areas of management, employee guidance and personality training dominate on the *executive level.* The share of specialist training courses, especially product schooling, is also surprisingly high. Executives from small and medium-sized businesses in particular use such schemes. On the *employee level* imparting of computer hardware and software knowledge, of specialist technical knowledge and commercial and product knowledge prevails.

In addition, there is a wide range of continuing training themes with a relatively high degree of usage in which both target groups are schooled and which are

consequently considered to be equally important for executives and employees. This can be seen as a reference to "corridor themes" (STIEFEL 1991) which exist in businesses. At the top of the list are data processing, personality training, foreign languages, quality assurance, marketing/sales and telecommunications.

The increasing significance of personnel training and continuing training led in the last few years to a quantitative increase in the choice of personnel development and consultation on offer outside the company (KAILER 1991, 1995b). The *change in co-operation* between companies — both small and medium-sized businesses without their own responsibility for the development of personnel as well as large companies with corresponding departments — *with external providers of training and consultation* are becoming increasingly interesting (REUTHER et al. 1996).

Additionally, it is becoming increasingly clear that personnel development cannot be delegated in its entirety to a training department. Rather, *all levels of management* are *responsible* for targeted employee development and should be supported by specialised managerial units such as a personnel department and a person or department responsible for personnel development. In the opinion of Austrian personnel development and continuing training experts, specialist departments in many businesses are in permanent contact with the management of the company. It is also apparent that the bigger the company, the more importance is attributed to personnel development by the executives and the more interested in it are the employees (see also KAILER et al. 1999). Personnel development and continuing training are also increasingly seen as an important area where action is needed from the works council. (See also BREISIG 1990, 1997.)

The number of **people responsible for personnel development or continuing training** has tended to increase in recent years. Earlier studies showed that approximately 30% to 44% of the companies surveyed employed full-time and part-time individuals with responsibility for continuing training (see KAILER 1991, 1995a). In the meantime, more than half of the companies currently employ *full-time personnel developers*. This is presumably one of the reasons for the wide spectrum of personnel development tasks carried out and instruments used in the companies.

30% of the companies which took part in the study "Betriebliche Kompetenzentwicklung in Österreich" ("Corporate Skills Development in Austria") (KAILER/EDER/FLAKE/MAYRHOFER 1999) employ one full-time personnel developer, 13% employ two, and with 12% there are three or more. Furthermore, every seventh company has at least one full-time trainer and every third has (usually several) part-time trainers.

Especially large companies have several full-time and part-time employees for personnel development and continuing training at their disposal. Almost every second large company employs two or more personnel developers and furthermore, also normally has several part-time trainers in this area for reasons attributable to increasing capacity. It is usually executives and specialists who are employed as trainers from time to time. In comparison to this, the number of positions created for full-time trainers is much lower. This is also evidence for the established trend towards part-time specialist trainers. (See also KAILER et al. 1999.)

The skills requirements from in-company and external personnel in personnel development are changing drastically because of the appearance of new areas of responsibility and the *change of the role of the trainer and training organiser to advisor and process supervisor*. Interviews with experienced personnel developers show a tendency towards an "expansion" of the original tasks, such as an expansion in the direction of coaching and accompanying of organisational development projects within the company, combined with a simultaneous in-company delegation of the tasks attributed to specialist training and training organisation.

With regard to the **form of organisation of personnel development/continuing training** in Austria, personnel development in companies is most often organised as a central personnel development department or as a position within the personnel department (41%). In every fourth company and in particular in medium-sized and large businesses there is a central staff position and decentralised personnel with responsibility for the particular area. In smaller companies, on the other hand, the organisational structures differ considerably with there being very few formal rules. Approximately 3% of the companies outsource personnel development work.

With respect to the **division of continuing training agendas** within the company, inquiring into the training requirement and choice of participants are predominantly tasks for the superiors. The personnel development or continuing training department is responsible for planning, implementation and trainer selection. Responsibility for tasks is shared in the area of transfer support and evaluation, although shortfalls are already visible here: in the above study, a third of the companies explicitly claim that they do not carry out any transfer support, and a quarter do not implement any schemes for evaluating or controlling training. (See also KAILER et al. 1999.)

When examining the division of activities in a differentiated way, it becomes clear that the direct superiors are responsible for such personnel development and continuing training activities that demand a heavily individualised area-specific and employee-specific procedure. In other words, in order to carry out these tasks successfully, those responsible must possess detailed knowledge about the people and the work system (e. g.: implementation of appraisals, selection of personnel,

training of new employees, human resource planning, training requirement inquiries, etc.).

The personnel development departments, on the other hand, mainly carry out those tasks which are carried out across more than one area (e.g. most of the activities of training management) and/or which are characterised by conceptional and collective requirements: staff administration, controlling and structuring of incentive management.

On the whole it can be said that personnel development work is carried out by superiors and specialists co-operating with one another, albeit with different placing of emphasis. It furthermore turns out that there is also a division of labour between the personnel department and — if it exists — the personnel development unit: the personnel department continues to take care of the classic tasks such as looking for personnel and staff administration, while the unit mainly deals with tasks associated with employee training, including the development of executives and up-and-coming managers.

Co-operation of companies with **external providers** is becoming increasingly more important. Market analysis shows that there is a wide spectrum of providers in Austria. In addition to the dominant, large providers like the Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute (WIFI) (business promotion institutes) and the Berufsbildungsförderungsinstitute (BFI) (institutes for the promotion of vocational training), which mainly offer career-related seminars, there is an inestimable number of independent providers and small groups of providers. Estimates put the number in Austria from 2,500 to 4,000 providers of continuing training (Kailer 1995b), without taking business consultants into account.

In addition to the *increase in the number of providers* the training market is changing as a result of the *expansion of services on offer* from the providers of continuing training and the consultants. These services concentrate above all on a wide range of consultation offerings such as providing companies with support in setting up in-company personnel development structures and activities, coaching, moderation and process supervision, study advice, development of study material and study programmes, and a broker function in the construction of continuing training alliances, networks and co-operation alliances of companies. (See Kailer 1995b.)

Participation in continuing training using seminar-based forms of study (e.g. internal and external seminars, courses and training courses) or other non-seminar-based forms of study clearly varies between the companies (Table 1).

Table 1: Seminar-based Participation in Continuing Training according to Size of Company (average values)

Participation in ...	Up to 100 employees	101 to 500 employees	501+ employees	Total
...continuing training seminars and courses	40%	30%	35%	35%
...other forms of study	37.5%	20%	20%	20%

In this regard it has to be assumed that deficits already exist in the training statistics for seminar-based continuing training and that with the other forms no records at all are usually kept, making the data given by companies pure guesswork in part. However, a tendency towards an increase in the importance of non-seminar-based schemes is recognisable.

In the case of the study mentioned above, the **continuing training cost** is for the most part borne by the companies. 60% of the businesses which answered bear the costs fully and another 20% bear up to 80% and more of the costs (Table 2). Service businesses in particular (including banks and insurance companies) meet the continuing training costs completely (Table 3).

Table 2: Bearer of the Training Costs according to Size of Company (n=169)

Bearer of the continuing training costs is the company with	Up to 100 employees	101 to 500 employees	501+ employees	Total
100%	65.6%	59.4%	58.3%	60.1%
80 – 99%	9.4%	20.3%	26.4%	39.9%

Table 3: Bearer of the Training Costs according to Branch of Business (n=169)

Bearer of the continuing training costs is the company with	Transport Handicraft	Trade	Services	Industry
100%	57.9%	57.1%	75.6%	52.2%
80 – 99%	10.6%	22.9%	11.4%	29.0%

Continuing training instigated by the company takes place mainly during working hours. The proportion of **continuing training time** taking place during working hours differs according to employee group, with individuals from the employee echelon receiving continuing training more often during working hours than executives (Table 4).

Table 4: Proportion of Working Hours Spent on Continuing Training according to Size of Company (average value, n=161)

Proportion of working hours spent on continuing training	Up to 100 employees	101 to 500 employees	501+ employees	Total
Executives	5%	50%	77.5%	50%
Employees	5%	65%	87.5%	70%

It can be summarised that in Austria the limitation to a set of seminars run and answered for by a central personnel department is increasingly giving way to a model of corporate skills development, realised in co-operation with executives and the personnel department or — if any — the personnel development unit. New forms of study are coming to the fore, that is, a movement away from the trip to a seminar to work-integrated skills development. An increasing importance of trainer and consultant groups and a development of new forms of co-operation with external staff can also be observed.

With respect to content, in the future it will be less the development of new instruments than the work on the general conditions of its use that will be devoted more attention to, e.g.:

- gradual removal of any shortcomings that are caused when personnel development experts and executives are looking for agreements;
- harmonisation of the development instruments used by different groups of people to avoid counterproductive effects;
- development of simple “tools” for usage by superiors or for self-assessment and self-evaluation by employees.

Equally important is the redefinition of the role of executives, of those concerned and of the trainer/consultant involved in the skills development process and the concrete implementation of these new arrangements in the day-to-day business within the company.

- In order to bring these forms of skills development to bear at all in a meaningful way, an extensive change to the entire company and study culture is often necessary.
- Training managers, trainers and internal consultants are faced with far-reaching changes to their understanding of their role (“from the trainer to the consultant/process supervisor”) which necessitate an on-going continuing development of their own skills.
- It is also important for the executives to develop their consultation method and socio-communicative skills, in order to be able to fulfil their key role of being responsible for the development of their employees.

Jos Frietman, Geert Kraayvanger

2.2 Continuing Training in the Netherlands

Continuing training in the Netherlands is a part of the vocational training system which follows general education (college) or initial vocational training. Within the framework of vocational training, full-time education at school (BOL[1]) carries more weight than Dutch dual vocational training (BBL[2]/apprenticeship system). This dominance, however, is not only of a purely quantitative nature. The standing of full-time education at school is clearly higher than that of the apprentice system, both with apprentices as well as with their parents and the employers.

Continuing training traditionally has no special status within the Dutch education system. As a result of the growth of unemployment since the end of the 1970s and the technical transformations in the 1980s, continuing training became increasingly more important. The Dutch government took a variety of measures to fight unemployment. New laws were passed in quick succession. The Dutch employment service was privatised with the involvement of both sides of industry and public authorities. Parallel to this, a new law, the "training and vocational training law", was introduced to regulate adult education.

Continuing training, however, does not only include continuing training of the unemployed but also adult education in general and political education for adults. Three segments can be differentiated here depending on the jurisdiction.

- Within the jurisdiction of the state are: general training for adults (Basiseducatie), general adult education (VAVO[3]), secondary (part-time) training and the open university.
- Within the jurisdiction of the employment service are: further training and retraining of unemployed people or workers facing unemployment.
- Within the jurisdiction of the two sides of industry are: further training and retraining of workers.

The importance of continuing vocational training has increased in the private sector. This is the case for both corporate continuing training (at the workplace and outside of it, both formally and informally) as well as continuing training from private training providers.

It is important to point out that the inclusion of private and public education facilities in continuing vocational training succeeded by using the following two

1 BOL = Beroepsopleidende leeweg
2 BBL = Beroepsbegleidende leerweg
3 VAVO = Voortgezet algemeen volwassenen anderwijs

instruments: collective wage agreements in the different sectors of industry as well as corporate agreements.

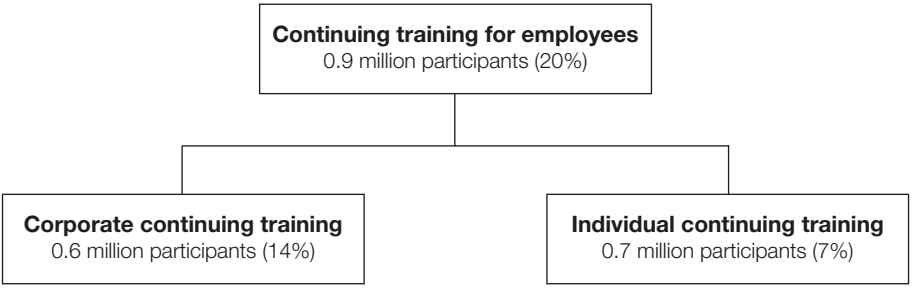
Participation in Corporate Continuing Training

Corporate continuing training is an important component of adult education. On the basis of available statistics no clear-cut distinction can be made at present between corporate continuing training and the continuing training offered by private training providers. The best possible distinction which can be made at present is between external and in-company continuing training.

A survey into corporate continuing training, which was carried out by the statistical office of the Netherlands (CBS[4]), established data on the type and scope of corporate continuing training in the private sector. This information was published in 1998. According to this, almost half of all companies in the private sector carried out corporate continuing training schemes in 1993. The degree of corporate continuing training in a company is determined by the size of the company: the larger the company, the higher the probability of corporate continuing training schemes.

Most companies which carry out continuing training do not have any conception of it. This is especially the case with small businesses. Among companies with more than 500 employees, the rate of those providing continuing training is almost 100%. Many of these companies follow a concrete notion of continuing training which is based on training budgets, training plans and full-time training personnel. As shown in Diagram 1, continuing training in companies is available for 0.9 million participants. This corresponds to 20% of all participants in continuing training in the Netherlands (see HÖVELS/KRAAYVANGER 1998).

Diagram 1: Continuing Training in the Netherlands according to Participants



4 CBS = Centraal bureau voor de statistiek

The Role of the State in the Field of Continuing Vocational Training

The Dutch government exerts only limited influence on corporate continuing training and what it does exert is usually indirect. It is presumed that companies, that is employers and employees, are first and foremost responsible for corporate continuing training. In accordance with a generally prevailing philosophy, the government is mainly responsible for vocational initial training and for the promotion of "selective flexibility", i.e. the provision of a broad and future-oriented basic vocational education as the basis for a work and training career. It can be summarised that vocational initial training is the responsibility of government whereas business is responsible for continuing vocational training. Nevertheless, the influence of the state on continuing vocational training must not be underestimated since the government:

- finances the employment service;
- promotes (and finances) training in branches of industry and companies;
- and promotes the training and continuing training of pupils in the vocational school system as well as the qualification of ethnic minorities and refugees.

Agreements in the Sectors of Industry

In recent years, continuing training agreements (for retraining and continuing vocational training) have been concluded in many branches of industry. These agreements can be concluded between several parties (employers and employees, trade unions and industry organisations, training providers). Different forms of co-operation are involved: training networks, a mutual training policy, training arrangements, regulations to control the demand and supply of training or financing solutions.

Special funds for training, education, continuing training and personnel development (the so-called *0&0 funds*) were set up in many branches of industry. Most of these funds are regulated by collective agreement and contribute partially to solving a central problem of training and continuing training: companies which do not carry out their own training entice qualified specialists away from companies which do train. The total volume of existing funds was estimated some years ago to be more than 386 million Euro.

Different possibilities are open to the unions and management to promote participation in training schemes. These include:

- the obligation for particular groups of employees to participate in continuing vocational training schemes;
- the right to paid or unpaid leave while taking part;
- paying the course fees which the participant has incurred;

- agreements on the function and position of the employee after successful participation;
- ensuring the general conditions of the continuing training for the relevant sector.

Some collective wage agreements make financing of a continuing training scheme conditional on the employee receiving a certificate of successful completion. Other agreements include detailed regulations on study costs (e.g. the collective wage agreements in the health and social sectors).

Analysis of training policy in some selected sectors shows that sectoral *training agreements* normally refer to training, study leave and training funds. In some sectors, additional agreements were concluded. These include amongst others funds for specific target groups such as women, long-term unemployed, employees without any or with a low level of education and foreign workers. Management and labour representatives in those sectors in which training agreements were made are heavily involved in training and continuing training. The analysis also shows that this co-operation has resulted in very different ways of structuring the training. The differences between the sectors are marked mainly by the degree of connection between training and employment policy as well as by the practical effects of training programmes and financing solutions. A closer investigation into the diverse developments and regulations in training policy as well as into the advantages and disadvantages of the concrete decisions taken by the political decision makers could provide valuable tips for improvement in vocational training and continuing training.

Practice clearly shows that implementing the sector-based training agreements poses a real problem for companies, especially small ones. Industrial companies have recognised this problem and are developing specific instruments to ease the implementation of vocational training and continuing training. Two types of instruments can be differentiated:

- instruments which are used to make the training on offer in the relevant sector more transparent for employers and employees and to encourage the target group to make use of what is on offer. Starting points for this are the following: catalogues with courses, the employment of training consultants, promotion programmes and the provision of assistance for companies which want to establish a training plan.
- instruments which bring the training on offer closer to companies, e.g. by holding courses in the companies, by setting up regional training centres and by moving training courses out to the regional training centres.

The effectiveness of the available instruments has not been evaluated so far. The mix of instruments and the conditions which need to be met for an optimum effect have not yet been looked at either.

Richard von Bardeleben, Ursula Beicht, Elisabeth M. Krekel

2.3 Continuing Training in Germany

Historic Development

After World War Two, West Germany first took up the tradition of free adult education from the 1920s. The large social groups in particular, such as the churches, trade unions and local authorities rebuilt adult education facilities which at first were intended to be used for re-educating a broad public. The most important facilities were the Volkshochschulen (adult education centres). Personality training, political training and general training were central to the training content. Vocational training at first played a subordinate role. Terms such as continuing training or even continuing vocational training were hardly ever used. They can neither be found in literature, politico-educational bulletins nor in laws and regulations of the time.

It was not before the end of the 1960s when the Deutscher Ausschuss für das Bildungs- und Erziehungswesen (German Committee for Education and Training) published its report "Zur Situation und Aufgabe der deutschen Erwachsenenbildung" ("The Situation and Task of Adult Education in Germany") that a new era began. In day-to-day economy, the problems in agriculture and mining in particular led to a large number of unemployed, whose trouble-free integration, especially into the industrial work process, was only possible with the accompanying adaptation and retraining measures in vocational training. These training processes were entirely adapted to the workplace, which, later on, led to a totally new understanding of the nature of adult education, where employment — or the job itself — made up an ever larger proportion of the training content. This transformation took place in parallel with the renewal and social recognition of the vocational training of apprentices.

The clearly visible outcome of this development were, above all, two pioneering statutory rulings. In 1969, the vocational training law (Berufsbildungsgesetz, BBiG) and the work support law (Arbeitsförderungsgesetz, AFG) laid the foundations for the regulations which are still valid today both for training in recognised training professions and also for vocational further training and retraining. This is when, especially in the professional sector, the transformation of the term adult education

began, which covered the terms continuing education or vocational continuing education without defining them. The BBiG uses the general term vocational education: *"According to the spirit of the law, vocational training, further training and vocational retraining are all vocational education. ... (3) The aim of further training is to make it possible to acquire and expand occupational knowledge and skills, to adapt them to technical development or to be promoted. ... (4) The aim of vocational retraining is to enable a move to another professional activity"* (§ 1 BBiG). At this time, the social importance of continuing training and of vocational training was stressed again and again, which was finally specified legally in the *Berufsbildungsgesetz (job training law)*. This does not mean, however, that the state took on financial responsibility for this.

The term continuing training was first introduced officially by the Deutsche Bildungsrat[3] (German Education Council) and in the Bildungsgesamtplan (Overall Training Plan) of the Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung[4] (National and Regional Commission for Training Planning and Research Support), essentially in the context of gainful employment or professional activity. In its "Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen" ("Structural Plan for the Education System) the Deutsche Bildungsrat specifies the term continuing training as follows: *"Continuing training is defined here as a continuation or resumption of organised study following the completion of a first phase of training which can vary in length. The end of the first phase of training and with this the possibility of starting continuing training is, as a rule, characterised by taking up full employment. In this context, housewives will be classed as gainfully employed. The boundaries between the first phase of training and continuing training remain fluid. A minimum period of employment as a condition for continuing training cannot be specified. Short-term briefing or training on-the-job do not come under the term continuing training."* (Deutscher Bildungsrat 1970, p. 197)

The Bund-Länder-Kommission gives a similar definition: *"Continuing training is the continuation or resumption of organised study following completion of an initial phase of education and taking up a position."* (Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung 1974, p. 11)

3 The Deutsche Bildungsrat was founded in 1965. It was supposed to take over the planning and co-ordination of the system of education in the Federal Republic of Germany. It permanently influenced federal policy with its "Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen" ("Structural Plan for the Education System"), published in 1970. The Deutsche Bildungsrat was dissolved in 1975.

4 The Bund-Länder-Kommission was founded in 1970 through an administrative agreement between the federal government and the states and took the place of the Deutsche Bildungsrat. In 1973, the Bund-Länder-Kommission tabled the Bildungsgesamtplan (Overall Training Plan), which constituted a longer-term plan of reform for the education system.

According to these definitions

- corporate (initial) training does not count as continuing training. Only study which is taken up on completion of the first phase of training and after entry into working life counts as continuing training. In Germany this is expressed in the clear separation between initial training, e.g. in the dual system, and continuing training. This distinction is not normally found in other countries in this form, which makes the comparison of training systems more difficult;
- the concept of continuing training is limited to organised study processes. Non-organised study processes such as the reading of trade journals or training on the job are not considered to be continuing training. These definitions were, however, overtaken by more recent developments in Germany: in addition to the organised (hard) forms of study, a series of other (soft) forms of study have established themselves in practice and in literature. These are for example called "studying in the process of work"[1], "work-integrated study"[2] or "self-led study"[3] (see for example QUEM – QUALIFIKATIONS-ENTWICKLUNGS-MANAGEMENT 1998);
- upper secondary leaving certificates and vocational retraining are considered to be continuing training. Even in Germany, however, this approach is not handled uniformly (e.g. in collections of statistical data), especially with respect to upper secondary leaving certificates;
- familiarisation with the company and brief training on the job are not considered to be continuing training, even though they are considered to be essential continuing vocational training schemes in the rapidly changing conditions of work organisation in corporate practice;
- no difference is made between vocational and non-vocational continuing training. There were often discrepancies between the definitions and new definitions were created, especially as it is very important to differentiate what belongs to one type and what belongs to another because of the political jurisdictions (central (federal) government/states) and financing (company, individual, the state). It cannot, however, be overlooked that there are many borderline cases where it makes little sense to separate vocational and non-vocational continuing training.

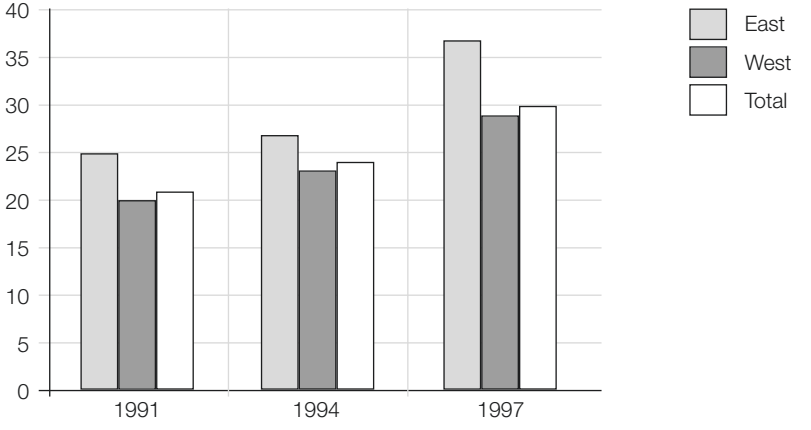
The AFG in particular was directed at continuing vocational training, which formed the basis of the financial support for continuing vocational training but not, however, for corporate continuing training and which was dissolved in 1998 by the

1 "Lernen im Prozess der Arbeit"
2 "arbeitsintegriertes Lernen"
3 "selbst gesteuertes Lernen"

Sozialgesetzbuch III (SGB III). (See for example Balli/Harke/Ramlow 2000.) In SGB III, the right to individual support for continuing vocational training is laid down. Workers can be given financial support, if *"continuing training is necessary to integrate them into the workplace if they are unemployed, to avert unemployment, or if it has been recognised that continuing training is necessary where they do not have any vocational qualifications, ..."*. (§ 77, SGB III)

The legal definitions are mainly there to systemise and create a basic understanding. Continuing vocational training, in addition to initial training, is a part of vocational training in its entirety. Further training and retraining measures are subsumed under the term continuing training. Vocational further training includes both measures for career advancement (advanced further training) as well as measures dealing with the adaptation to the relevant demands in working life (refresher training). In accordance with the interpretation of AFG/SGB III, the time spent settling in to a company is also considered to be a part of vocational training.

Diagram 1: Participation in Continuing Vocational Training (in %)



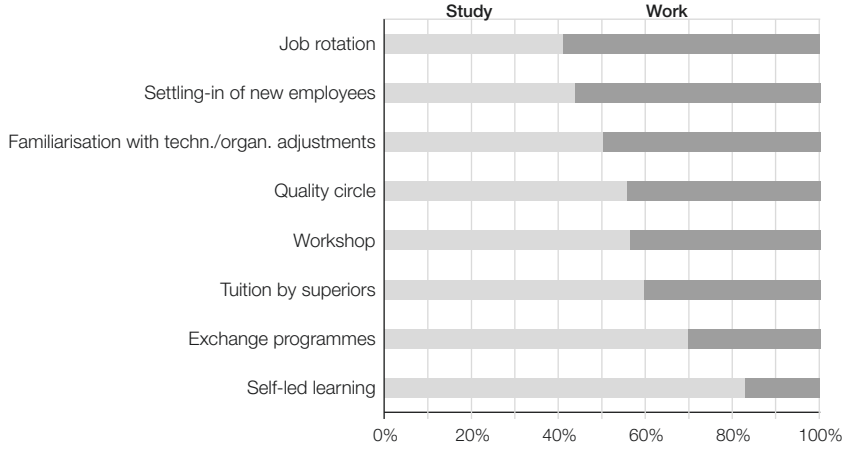
These definitions essentially form the basis of the continuing training reporting system (BSW, Berichtssystem Weiterbildung), which, at regular intervals, gives a complete overview of the individual continuing training behaviour of German people of working age and was established on behalf of the government department for education and research (BMBF, Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung). The data from the reporting system shows that participation in continuing training in total and in continuing vocational training in recent years has

continually increased (see Diagram 1). In 1997, a total of 30% of 19 to 65-year-olds underwent further vocational training. This corresponds to approximately 15.2 million participants in 1997. Compared to this, the figures for 1994 were 24% (around 11.2 million) and 21% (around 9.8 million) for 1991. Participation rates in the age groups 19 to 34 years and 35 to 49 years are therefore clearly higher than amongst 50 to 64-year-olds. The main reasons for participation in continuing vocational training given by those asked were that the schemes were directly connected with their occupations and that they helped them adapt to and familiarize themselves with new tasks in their jobs. For participants it is mainly a question of being able to carry out their duties better rather than a question of earning more money or getting a better job.

In the continuing training reporting system, continuing vocational training is differentiated from general continuing training. For some time, a distinction between hard (e.g. seminars, courses) and soft forms of continuing training (e.g. visits to trade fairs, lectures, half-day seminars, familiarisation with the job, quality circles, workshops, training programmes on television, reading specialist literature) has also been made. (See for example BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG UND FORSCHUNG 2000 (Department for Education and Research 2000).)

As a result of the process-oriented structure of corporate workflow and the introduction of teamwork, for example, work-related study forms have emerged since the beginning of the 1990s. The work and study shares of various job-related study forms were assessed by practitioners from different companies (see Diagram 2) in a FORCE survey. (See for example GRÜNWALD/MORAAL 1995, pp. 22).

Diagram 2: Study Share of Different Work-Integrated Study Forms (in %)



The corporate practitioners are of the opinion that studying stands in the foreground of "self-led study" (use of specialised books, computer-assisted learning, etc.). This is also the case with exchange programmes with other companies and with tuition from superiors where the study shares dominate from a corporate viewpoint. This is different with the settling-in of new employees and for job rotation. In the case of these work-integrated study forms, the study share is estimated at less than 50%.

Work-integrated forms in corporate continuing training have increased continuously in recent years. Weiss (1994) ascertained a high status for "studying in a work situation", "self-led study" and "informative events" for corporate continuing training. This development runs parallel with a shortening of the duration of classical forms of study like courses and seminars. The continuing training reporting system shows a similar trend from 1994 onwards, and for the year 2000, questions on self-led learning are planned to be asked for the first time.

The System of Continuing Training

All in all, continuing training in Germany is the part of the training system which has developed with particular dynamism for decades. In the meantime, continuing training has been recognised in politico-educational reports as an integral component, the fourth pillar (quarternary sector), of the entire education system. Continuing training, however, in the case of interaction of the individual parts, that is, with respect to its recognised status as an equal component, is still treated as the poor cousin of the education system. This applies in particular to financial support from public funds.

The difference between continuing vocational training and the other parts of the German education system are illustrated by the following aspects:

- market economy orientation,
- pluralism of providers,
- subsidiarity principle,
- financing.

Market Economy Orientation

It is possible to talk of a market for continuing training in two respects: on the one hand the providers of continuing training programmes are as a rule in competition with each other and on the other hand those demanding these programmes (e.g. companies, individuals) make or may make their training decisions predominant-

ly on the basis of quality and price. In so doing, there is, however, an incomplete market for continuing training which consists of regional, national and sectoral sub-markets. Even in the regional/local sub-markets, transparency of the product is more or less limited for many potential customers due to its size and its variety. There is, above all, a lack of quality-oriented structuring of the individual markets. The conditions for a roughly complete market have also not been met from the point of view of the demand side because many individual customers do not want or are not able to use their own initiative and take responsibility for their own further training. Reasons for this are a lack of motivation and understanding of their own need for continuing training on the one hand and financial difficulties on the other. The demand side is to a considerable extent dominated by institutional customers (e.g. the public employment service and companies) rather than by individuals.

Pluralism of Providers

The continuing vocational training market is characterised by a variety of providers. These include among others:

- private companies and public agencies;
- state-owned, municipal and public institutions (e.g. universities, adult education centres, chambers);
- trade unions and employers' associations (e.g. Berufsfortbildungswerk des Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (DGB), Bildungswerk der Deutschen Angestellten Gewerkschaft (DAG), Bildungswerke der Wirtschaft);
- church-run training establishments of the two main denominations;
- professional associations, trade associations (e.g. federation of German engineers (Verein Deutscher Ingenieure, VDI));
- private, commercial and non-profit providers.

The variety and multitude of providers is an expression of the plural German society which has led to such a wide range of targets, methods and programmes and which demands from the providers a high degree of innovation and persuasiveness, to enable them to offer their product on the market and to succeed. For the customers this means that they have to move on unfamiliar ground, where it is difficult for them to find their way around without help. Support is given for example in the form of checklists and tips for continuing vocational training. (See Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung 2000 (Federal Institute for Vocational Training 2000); Stockmann/Bardeleben 1993.) To improve transparency, the setting-up of a "Stiftung Bildungstest" (a foundation for the testing of training measures) is current-

ly being discussed, which, like Stiftung Warentest (a foundation which tests products and services), would be committed to consumer protection and would be able to issue quality judgements on training programmes (KREKEL/SAUTER 2000).

Subsidiarity Principle

In Germany, the state, above all in the area of continuing vocational training, is only active in a subsidiary way. It is only when the demands on the continuing training market surpass the initiatives and efforts of the private sector that the state intervenes to provide support. For example, people who are unemployed or are threatened with unemployment receive financial support for continuing vocational training. Therefore, the network of legal regulations and standards in the area of continuing vocational training is also very loose-knit compared to other parts of the training system (e.g. universities, schools, dual vocational training). This is surprising in that great importance is attached to continuing vocational training in the field of regional promotion of trade and industry and labour market policy. Moreover, the German situation is characterised by the fact that the legal responsibilities are divided between central (federal) government and the states, with the federal government having responsibility for out-of-school continuing vocational training, while continuing training that takes place at schools (e.g. at specialised technical schools) comes under the jurisdiction of the federal states.

Financing

From the point of view of financing it can be said that the financial means for vocational continuing training come primarily from non-public funds. The state (central (federal) government, federal states and municipalities) bears above all the costs for continuing training of its own employees. The institutional support of vocational continuing training from the public purse (e.g. for adult education centres) covers only a minimal proportion of the entire cost. The federal employment agency (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, BA), which is financed mainly from the contributions of employers and employees, and individuals and private sector companies carry the largest part of the overall cost of continuing vocational training. (See for example BARDELEBEN/SAUTER 1995; KREKEL/KATH 1999.)

In the area of corporate continuing training, the *"trend towards economisation of corporate training"* (FALK 2000, p. 316) brings to the fore questions about the cost but also about the benefits and the effective organisation of corporate training processes. This development, however, is not always discussed under the banner of training control, but frequently just with respect to immediate cost considerations.

The empirical studies of corporate continuing training (see for example Weiss 1990, 1994, 1997 and 2000) carried out regularly by the Institute for German Economics (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft, IW) deal above all with the cost of corporate continuing training. They determine the direct and indirect costs that private sector companies spend on continuing training for employees. These studies also highlight continuing training trends such as strategies to determine continuing training needs (1990) or measures for continuing training control (1997). The term training control was first mentioned in1994 in connection with the increased necessity for more efficiency in corporate continuing training.

Training control in Germany was the subject of an empirical study in the research project "Möglichkeiten von Bildungscontrolling als Planungs- und Steuerungsinstrument der betrieblichen Weiterbildung" ("Possibilities of Training Control as an Instrument for the Planning and Control of Corporate Continuing Training") which was carried out jointly by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, BIBB) and the Institute for Development Planning and Structure Research (Institut für Entwicklungsplanung und Strukturforschung, IES) at the University of Hanover. (See for example Krekel/Seusing 1999; Bötel/Krekel 2000.) On a European level, aspects of training control were studied for the first time in the *"Controlling in der betrieblichen Weiterbildung im Vergleich"* project.

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3 Planning and Control of Corporate Qualification Activities in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany — Results of a Written Corporate Survey

An increasing number of European companies consider the qualification of employees to be a decisive factor for competitiveness in regional, national and international markets. Rapid economic, technological and organisational changes require constant adaptation and furthering of knowledge. Companies use different strategies to optimally implement the necessary qualification strategies for their employees. Training control is therefore gaining increasing importance around the world as an instrument for optimising the planning and control processes of corporate continuing training. A fundamental objective of the Leonardo project *"Controlling in der betrieblichen Weiterbildung im europäischen Vergleich"* is to

collect empirical information on the extent to which elements of training control have gained entry into corporate practice in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany. One of the main aims was to look at common developments and differences that persist in the three countries with regard to importance and organisation of training control.

In spring 2000, the people in charge of training and personnel in companies in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany were questioned about the planning and control of training activities in their companies. This written survey involved questionnaires being sent to 800 companies with more than 50 employees in each of the three countries. The companies were selected randomly. The questionnaires were completed and returned by 39 companies (5%) from Austria, 53 companies (7%) from the Netherlands and 91 companies (11%) from Germany.[5] The Dutch companies which participated in the survey came predominantly from the industrial sector. Apart from industrial companies it was above all companies from the service sector which took part in Austria and Germany. In both Austria and the Netherlands, around a third of the companies surveyed had 250 employees or more. In Germany, companies of this size only accounted for around a fifth of the total. The following results are based entirely on those companies which participated. The results are by no means representative from a statistical angle, but they give important hints at the development tendencies in each country.

Starting from the present and future general situation of the companies in the three countries, the following section will explain the type of training activities implemented by the companies as well as how the companies evaluate the importance of controlling in corporate training activities and to what extent they already execute important elements of training control.

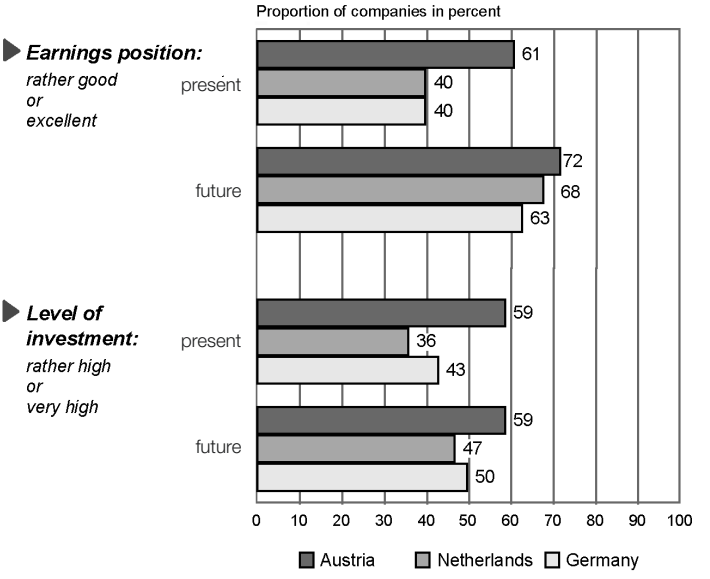
3.1 Assessment of the Present and Future Situation of the Companies

In order to gain clues about the economic situation of the companies, those companies surveyed were asked for their evaluation of the profitability and the amount of investment into their company at that time and in the future. The participating companies in Austria considered their current earnings position to be clearly more

5 The low response rate is not untypical of written corporate surveys. In this case, it can also be put down to the fact that it was not possible to send out reminders because of the scarcity of resources for the Leonardo project. Another reason is that the surveys were not addressed to a particular person in the companies as no contacts were known who could be directly addressed.

positive than companies in the Netherlands or in Germany (see also Diagram 1[6]). In Austria more than three fifths of the companies consulted judge their earnings position to be rather good or excellent while the figure is only two fifths in both of the other two countries. In all three countries many companies predict future improvement, with approximately two thirds of the companies assuming that the earnings position will be either rather good or excellent.

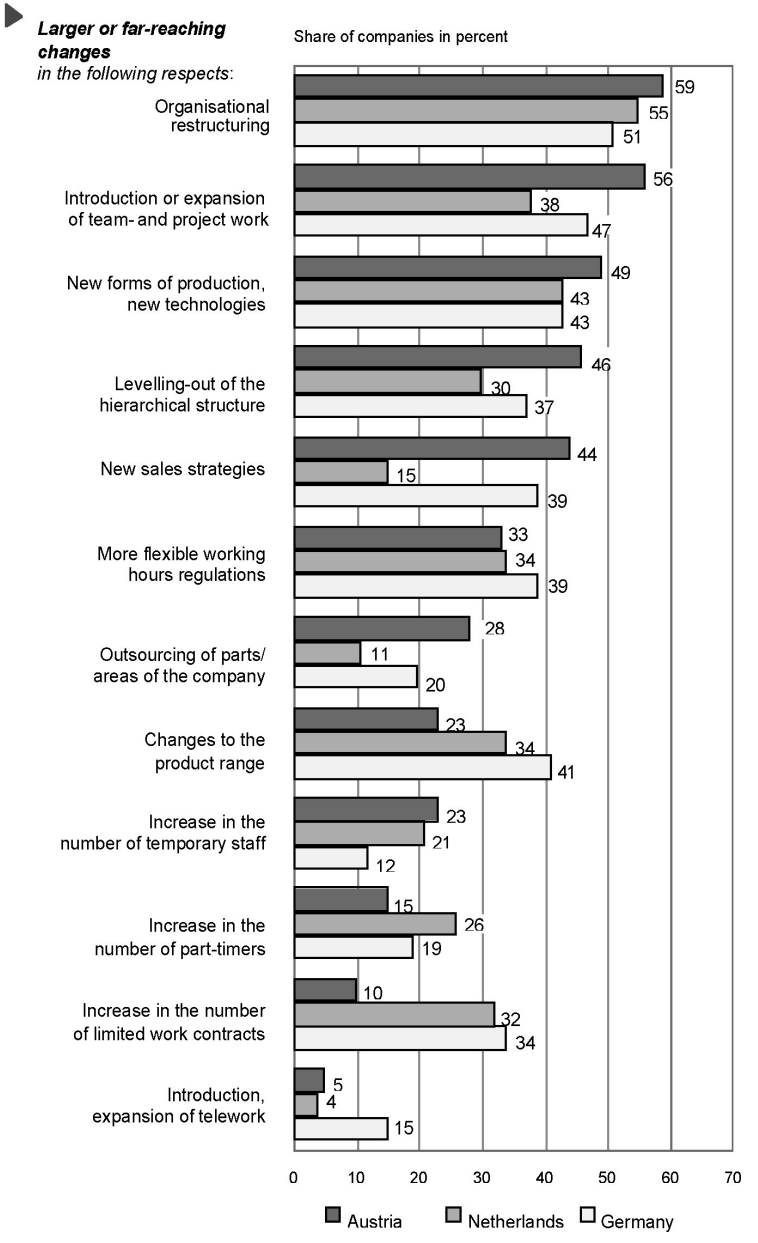
Diagram 1: Assessment of the Earnings Position and of Investment Level in the Companies Surveyed



The assessment of the current level of investment is likewise more positive with the Austrian companies than in the companies from the other two countries. For more than half of the Austrian companies judge their current investment levels to be high or very high while only around two fifths judge this to be the case in the Netherlands and a good third in Germany. For the future, no major changes to the amount of investment emerge in the companies questioned in the three countries. Only in the Netherlands and in Germany does a slightly larger proportion of the companies expect a rather high to very high investment.

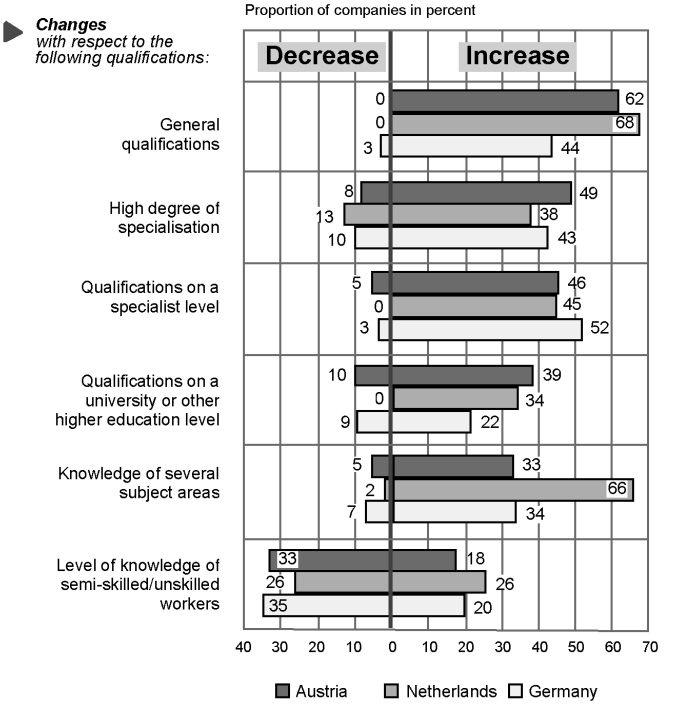
6 In this as in the following diagrams the arrangement of the individual categories refers to the results achieved in the Austrian companies surveyed, starting from the highest frequency of answer and going down to the lowest.

Diagram 2: Planned Changes in the Companies Surveyed



The far-reaching restructuring processes which took place in many European companies in recent years cannot by any means be considered to have come to an end. Instead, the survey revealed that in many cases considerable changes are still on the agenda in numerous respects in the companies (see also Diagram 2). In more than half of the companies consulted in all three countries, larger organisational restructuring is planned. In a considerable number of cases an introduction or expansion of team- and project work is planned and seen as an essential change in the companies taken in question, though this is less often the case in the Netherlands than in Austria and Germany. In a relatively large number of companies a larger change is expected due to new production forms and new technologies. Moreover, levelling-out of hierarchical structures is an important change which is on the agenda relatively frequently, especially in Austria and Germany. The introduction of new sales strategies and outsourcing of operating units or company divisions also play an important role in Austria and Germany, but less so in the Netherlands. This might be related to the fact that in the Netherlands the tertiary sector is already highly developed, and therefore such changes are less relevant.

Diagram 3: Future Changes to Qualification or Competence Profiles of Employees in the Participating Companies



Another striking fact is that a relatively high proportion of about one third of the Dutch and German companies are planning a considerable increase in the number of limited employment contracts. In Austria and the Netherlands increased use of temporary staff hired via temporary employment agencies can be seen in more than one fifth of the participating companies. Moreover, a marked increase in the number of part-time workers and limited employment contracts is expected in more than one quarter of the participating Dutch companies. This can be explained by legislation for more flexibility at work which was introduced at the end of the 1990s. This legislation further facilitates part-time and limited employment contracts, leading to a further increase even though part-time work in particular is already very common. In Germany, too, the increase in the number of limited employment contracts expected by the participating companies can be attributed to a corresponding relaxation in the law. An introduction or expansion of telework on any significant scale is, on the other hand, not planned in many cases by the companies in all three countries.

Against the background of the continuous varied changes, most of the companies surveyed expect that in future the overall demand for employee qualifications and skills will also change. Above all an increase in general qualifications such as social and methodological skills is considered necessary, in particular with the companies surveyed in Austria and the Netherlands, where the figure was two thirds (see also Diagram 3). A relatively large number of companies — approximately half of the companies in Austria and somewhat fewer in the other two countries — assume that their employees will be more specialised in the future. A reduction in the amount of specialisation on the other hand is rather rarely anticipated. In all three countries the companies surveyed often consider an increase in specialist qualifications and to a somewhat lesser extent in university level or specialised higher education qualifications to be necessary. The future importance of having knowledge in several subject areas at a time is stressed above all by the Dutch companies which also least often see an increase in the degree of specialisation as necessary. As far as the requirement level of semi-skilled and unskilled workers is concerned, a decrease is all in all more often reckoned with by the participating companies than an increase. Research results in the Netherlands show that employers attach considerable importance to “entry skills”, i.e. motivation and a good attitude to work, articulateness and social skills, when semi-skilled and unskilled workers join the company. Through learning on the job the plan is that these entry skills can be retained and improved enabling these workers to reach a higher skill level (den Boer/Frietman/Hövels/Buursink 1998).

It can be deduced from this that in the companies in all three countries a lasting structural, technological and work-organisation change is taking place and that

the requirement profile for employees is moving in the direction of higher and supra-specialist qualifications as well as specialisation in particular fields of expertise. At the same time — reinforced by the increasing use of personnel employed for a limited time and temporary workers — there is constant change in the corporate employee structure. In general, it can be assumed that it is only possible to successfully cope with these permanent changes in the world of work and with the increasing demands on the employees if they are accompanied by suitable training activities for all groups of employees in the company. Only then can the real investment of the company pay off and the expectations be realised in the form of a good earnings position.

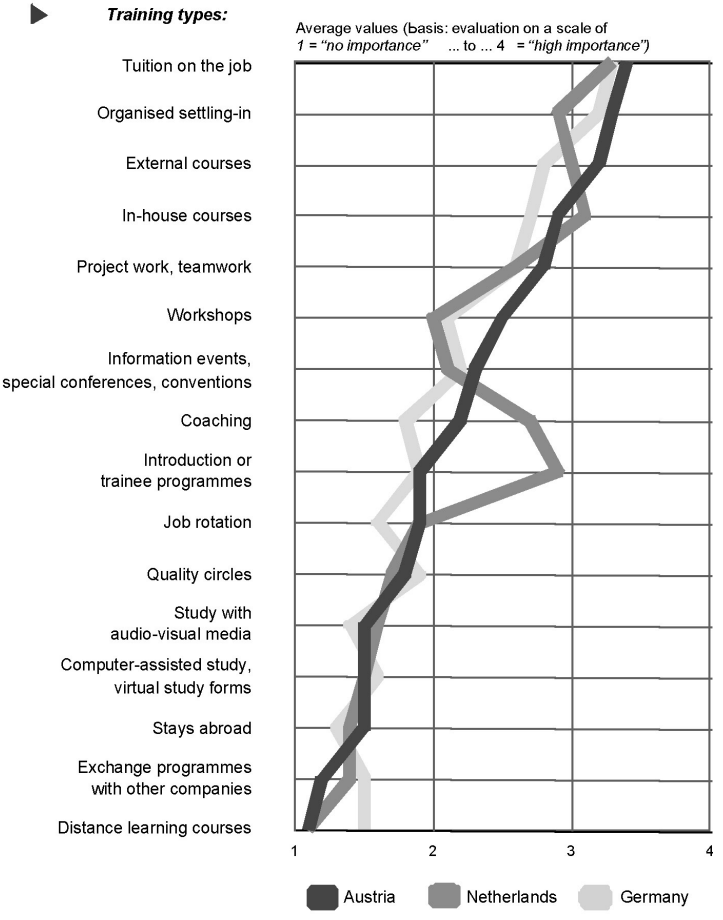
3.2 Current Corporate Training Activities and Future Developments

Various types of training activities take place within the companies in order to meet the training requirements of their employees. In the participating companies of all three countries, on-the-job tuition is assigned the highest level of importance, followed by the organised settling-in of employees (see also Diagram 4).[7] Job-related or work-integrated forms of study are therefore more important than classical forms of study like in-company and external courses and seminars which, nevertheless, are also given a high status. Study which takes the form of project work, teamwork and workshops — once again job-related or work-integrated forms of study — are likewise considered to be important in a relatively large number of companies.

An outstanding aspect is the high evaluation assigned to coaching as well as introduction and trainee programmes by the participating Dutch companies. This can be explained by the fact that in the Netherlands there is a tendency for a large amount of continuing training to be implemented within the framework of coaching processes. Coaching, therefore, is not limited to executives but is open to all employees. In-company coaches (superiors) who assume the role of advisers or moderators are often found. The term coaching, therefore, is understood as meaning something different in the Netherlands than it does in Austria or Germany, where coaching is primarily focused on executives and where, as a rule, external coaches are commissioned. The high status given to introduction and trainee pro-

7 The participants were asked to evaluate the different training activities using a scale of 1 = “no importance” to 4 = “high importance”. Based on these values, an average was worked out. The higher this was, the higher was the evaluation of the importance. All additional arithmetic means taken from evaluation questions, which were always based on a scale of 1 to 4, are to be interpreted accordingly.

Diagram 4: Importance of Different Training Activities in the Companies Surveyed



grammes can be attributed to the fact that in the Netherlands trainee programmes are often carried out in companies to teach new entrants to the workforce practical skills after their predominantly school-based training. In Austria and Germany this is less necessary because of the high degree of importance given to in-company training.

Newer forms of study, such as learning with audio-visual media (e.g. video) or computer-assisted learning, are assigned a high degree of importance by a rather small number of the companies surveyed in the three countries. Employee trips abroad and exchange programmes with other companies, too, are only considered to be important by few companies. The lowest evaluation in the Austrian and

Dutch companies is apportioned to distance learning courses which, however, get off lighter in Germany.

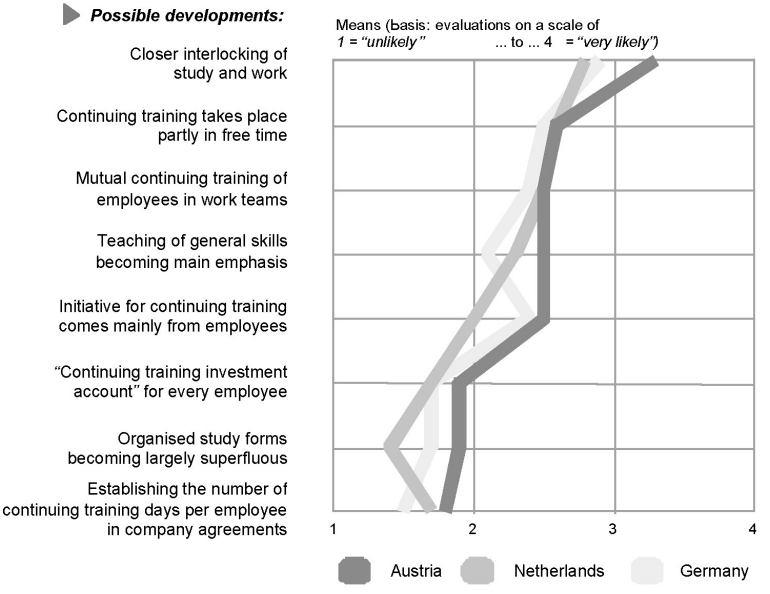
The decision in favour of a particular way of implementing the necessary training is taken from different standpoints in the companies. Financial, economic, organisational or qualitative reasons can be decisive in this. For each type of programme the companies were asked for the most important reason for their decision. In the case of the classic forms of learning, qualitative advantages are put forward most often. In the case of external courses, for instance, this applies to half of the companies in the three countries. Qualitative aspects, however, also play a decisive role in many of the job-related or work-integrated forms of learning as is shown for instance by the fact that on-the-job tuition is implemented in almost half of the companies. In the case of learning with audio-visual media or of computer-assisted learning, on the other hand, it is more often organisational reasons that are given. The main advantage that is probably seen in these forms of study is flexibility for the individual employees as far as room and time are concerned. Financial/economic reasons are rarely decisive with nearly all types of programme.

A series of changes are also to be expected in the years ahead in the field of corporate continuing training. The participants in the companies were asked for their assessment of the probability of particular developments occurring (see Diagram 5). The most common expectation is an even closer interlocking of study and work. Many also consider it likely that in future employees will train each other in their work teams. Only a relatively small number of those surveyed — in the Netherlands and in Germany even fewer than in Austria — are, however, of the opinion that the classic, organised forms of study would thus become superfluous. It is often assumed that corporate continuing training will in future take place partly in the employees' own spare time. With this it becomes clear that in many companies the necessary continuing training of employees is no longer carried out exclusively during working hours. A relatively large number of the people responding also expect that in future the initiative for taking part in training activities will come mainly from employees. Only few people think that in the next few years employees will be likely to have a claim based on works agreements to a particular number of training days. The setting-up of "continuing training investment accounts" for every employee is also mostly considered to be rather unlikely by the companies surveyed.

It can be summarised that the classic, organised forms of study are not superceded in the companies surveyed in the three countries despite the ever increasing importance of job-related or work-integrated forms of study everywhere. These new forms are rather to be thought of as complementary measures. Qualitative

or organisational aspects rather than financial/economic reasons are above all decisive in choosing a particular form of study. A clear tendency is emerging for the future in the companies in all three countries where individual employees will take on more responsibility for their own continuing vocational training, that is, more self-initiative and the readiness to invest personal free time will be expected.

Diagram 5: Evaluation of Future Developments in the Field of Continuing Training in the Companies Surveyed



3.3 Controlling in Corporate Continuing Training

It has hitherto not been the case that controlling within the framework of corporate training activities (understood as a planning and control instrument for all phases of the training process) has been considered to be important by all companies and implemented by them. (See for example KREKEL/GNAHS 2000; KAILER/EDER/MAYRHOFER 2000 et al.) The importance given to training control by the companies surveyed in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany varies widely. In around half of the Dutch and German companies and two fifths of the Austrian companies,

training control at the present time is attached a high degree of importance, while the remaining companies consider it to be rather unimportant.[8] For the future, however, many more of the companies surveyed think that training control would be very important (90% in Austria and more than 85% in the Netherlands and Germany).

Even if comprehensive training control is only carried out in some companies, most companies implement at least individual important elements. Ascertaining of the corporate training requirement, evaluation of the training programmes carried out, assessment of the benefits and recording of the costs have the highest importance. Establishing figures, which contributes to greater transparency in the field of corporate continuing training and enables both in-company and external comparisons to be made, has a special status. The extent to which these controlling elements are implemented in the companies surveyed in the three countries is shown below.

3.3.1 Determining the Corporate Training Requirement

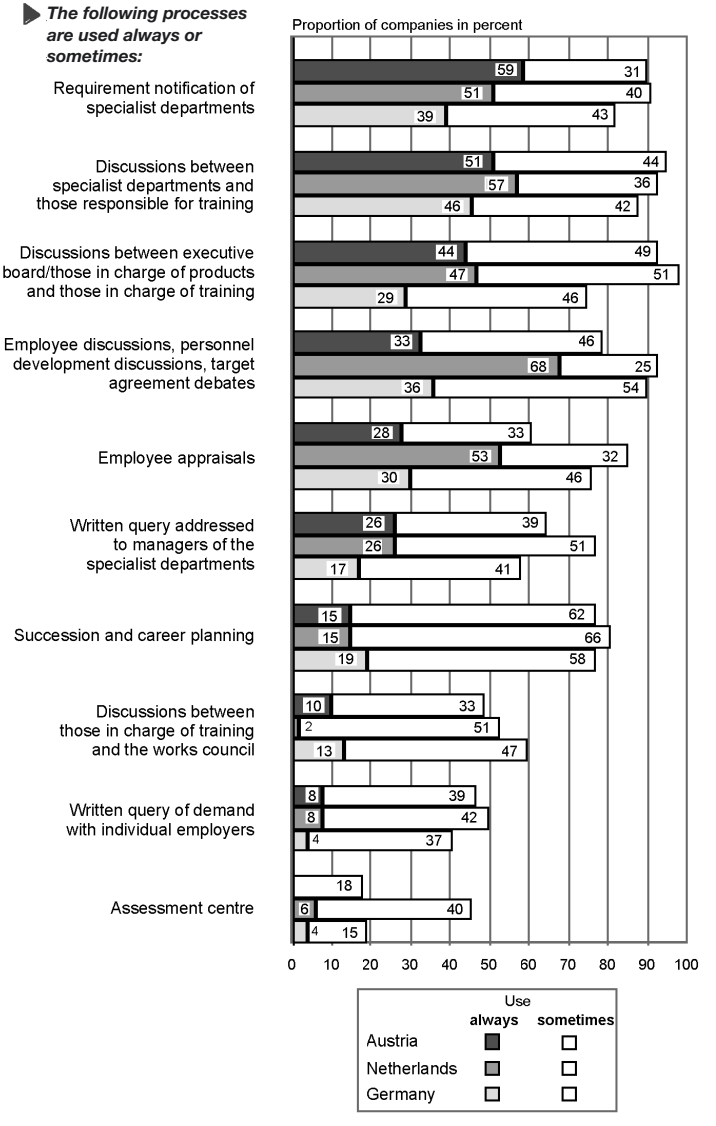
The systematic determining of the training requirement is a decisive condition for successful corporate training activities. The companies apply different processes in order to determine the individual continuing training requirement of individual employees on the one hand and the training requirements on the level of the specialist departments and the entire company on the other. (See for example KREKEL 1999; SEUSING/BÖTEL 2000 et al.) Some processes are institutionalised, i.e. they are always carried out in a particular shift, while others only occur sporadically at irregular intervals.

The most institutionalised processes in the companies surveyed in all three countries are requirement notifications from the specialist departments and discussions between specialist departments and those in charge of training. These processes take place regularly in over half of the Austrian and Dutch businesses, while the corresponding proportion for German companies is somewhat lower (see also Diagram 6). Regular discussions between the executive board or those responsible for product training and continuing training are also relatively common in Austria and the Netherlands, while again in Germany this is less the case. Determining the individual training requirement by institutionalised employee discussions, personnel development discussions, target agreement debates or by employee appraisals is also very common (almost twice as common even in the

8 To depict this, the scale of 1 = "unimportant" to 4 = "very important" was summarised as two categories (1 and 2 = "rather unimportant", 3 and 4 = "important"). Corresponding summaries were also carried out below with all further evaluations.

surveyed Dutch companies as in the Austrian and German ones). A written query of demand with the individual employees, on the other hand, is always carried out in only a very small number of the companies surveyed in all three countries. Regular discussions between those responsible for training and the works council do

Diagram 6: Use of Processes to Determine the Training Requirement in the Companies



not take place very often. Determining the training requirement within the framework of an assessment centre plays the smallest role in the companies in each of the three countries.

The different processes for determining the training requirement are admittedly not continually used in many of the companies surveyed but are implemented at least from time to time. Taking this into consideration, most of the methods mentioned for determining the requirement are very widespread, with some of them being used in more than nine tenths of the companies. From this it becomes clear that nearly all the companies in the three countries use several processes to establish the training requirement (albeit only at irregular intervals in some cases).

3.3.2 Evaluation of Corporate Training Activities and Means Used to Ensure Appliance

Further core elements of training control are the success evaluation of implemented training activities (see for example EBBINGHAUS 2000 et al.) and the means used to ensure appliance of what has been learned in the workplace (see also PATRY 2000). In order to check success, the participants are frequently asked at the end of the continuing training in the companies if they were satisfied with the training programme. Over half of the companies surveyed in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany admitted that they systematically and regularly carry out such examining of participants. This very often takes the form of discussions between the participants and their superiors. Such discussions take place with every continuing training programme in around half of the companies surveyed from all three countries (see also Diagram 7). Regular discussions between the participants and those in charge of continuing training or the trainers are much less common. A one-off written survey of the participants is common on a regular basis in a good quarter of Austrian and Dutch companies and approximately in every seventh German company. Multiple written surveys at particular intervals after the training programme (in order to record the long-term success of the programme as judged by the participants) only exist in isolated cases as a permanently used procedure. The different possibilities for determining participant satisfaction are admittedly not always, but at least sometimes, employed by a relatively large number of companies in the three countries.

The satisfaction of the participants does not, however, necessarily say anything about whether the knowledge or skills of the individuals have actually been improved in the expected way by the training activity. A purposeful study success test is necessary for this. Those surveyed in over two fifths of the participating Austrian and German companies and a good third of the Dutch companies said

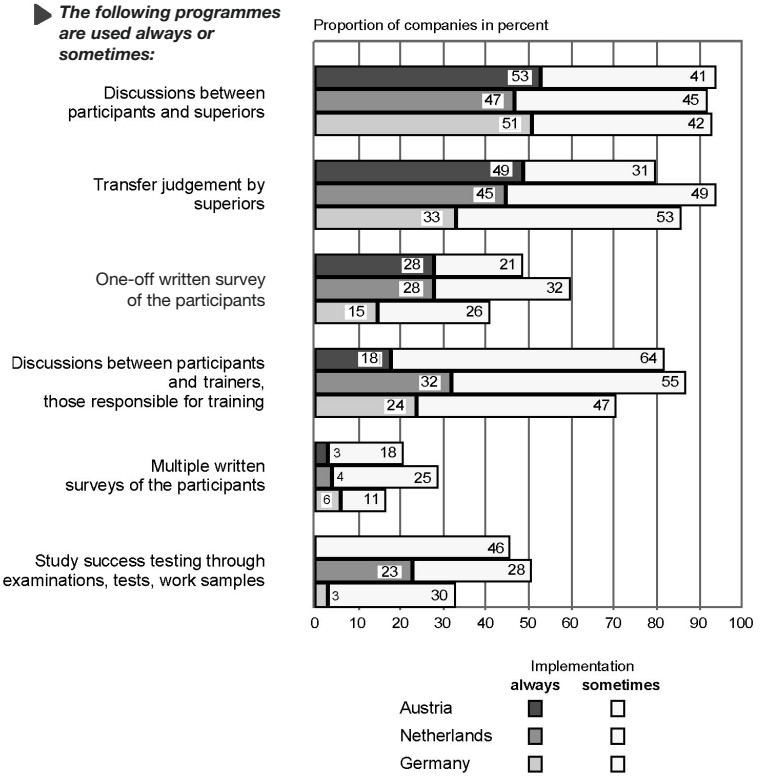
that the study success is systematically and regularly tested. This can be carried out by examinations and tests after the training programmes or by the participants completing work samples. Such a study success test takes place regularly in just under a quarter of the Dutch companies surveyed. Examinations, tests and work samples are planned now and then in a relatively large number of firms (just under every second in Austria and a good quarter in the Netherlands and Germany) at the end of the continuing training programmes.

The decisive factor for the success of programmes however, from the point of view of the company, is whether the individual participant can also apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills to his/her job. Many companies therefore try to ensure that what is learned is applied by means of purposeful programmes. This most often takes place in the companies surveyed in all three countries (in more than two thirds) by the superiors setting tasks for the employees who took part in the continuing training, in which the newly acquired skills can be directly used. The companies surveyed also said very often that they pay attention to practice phases in the continuing training courses and that they give the participants time to test what they have learned. With over four fifths of companies doing this, both aspects are clearly more important in the Netherlands than in Austria where this is less than three fifths and in Germany where it is less than half.

The transfer success of the training activities is checked systematically and regularly in a wide range of companies. According to the answers of those who took part in the survey, this is the case in about half of the Dutch and German companies and in two fifths of the Austrian companies. The superiors often judge whether what was learned was able to be put into practice for the employees who participated in the continuing training. This takes place regularly after the training programmes in somewhat less than half of the companies surveyed in Austria and the Netherlands and a third in Germany, and at least sometimes in a relatively large number of companies. An assessment by superiors, however, does certainly not suffice by itself as a systematic transfer test.

Although evaluation programmes are carried out in many cases for at least some of the training activities in the companies, success testing is among the most difficult aspects of corporate continuing training activities. Because of this there are also a range of reasons for the companies which rather speak against planning an evaluation of the continuing training programmes. The obstacle most often cited by (around half of) the companies surveyed in all three countries is that it is often not possible to reliably ascertain the study success of a training activity. In this context, many companies consider the value of the result of satisfaction surveys to be rather low (in fact half of the Austrian companies and somewhat less than half of the Dutch and German companies). Around a third of the

Diagram 7: Implementation of Programmes to Evaluate the Training Activities in the Companies Surveyed



companies surveyed in the three countries consider the ascertaining of participant satisfaction to be too work-intensive and time-consuming. In the opinion of a relatively large number of companies scepticism or participant rejection is an obstacle to determining study success, e.g. with examinations, tests or work samples. More than half of the Austrian companies, two fifths of the German companies and just under one fifth of the Dutch companies fear such reservations from their employees. The objection that the application of what has been learned cannot be assessed exactly is mentioned relatively often as an obstacle to carrying out transfer testing by the companies surveyed. More than half of the Dutch companies say this, which is clearly more often than with the German companies where this is mentioned by a good third.

3.3.3 Benefit Evaluation of the Corporate Training Activities

Even if participants were satisfied with a training programme, the desired study success was reached and everything that was learned was transferred into application in the workplace, this does not yet describe the benefits for the company from the implementation of the continuing training. To do this, the extent to which any positive effects from the training activities are taking shape in the company (not least with respect to the operating result) needs to be looked at. Determining the benefits of continuing training is considered to be one of the central elements of training control. (See for example Bardeleben/Herget 1999; Frietman/Boer/Kraayvanger 2000; Herget/Beicht 2000 et al.) Admittedly, an exact quantification of the benefit of continuing training in corporate practice has so far not been considered to be feasible. Certain corporate developments can be looked at however where a positive influence from the training activities can be assumed. Continuing training, for example, can contribute to improving product quality and customer satisfaction or improve the problem-solving capability of employees. The positive effects of continuing training on the company can be measured in such criteria, where admittedly it is mostly not possible to distinguish between the amount of influence of continuing training and the amount of other in-company and external factors.

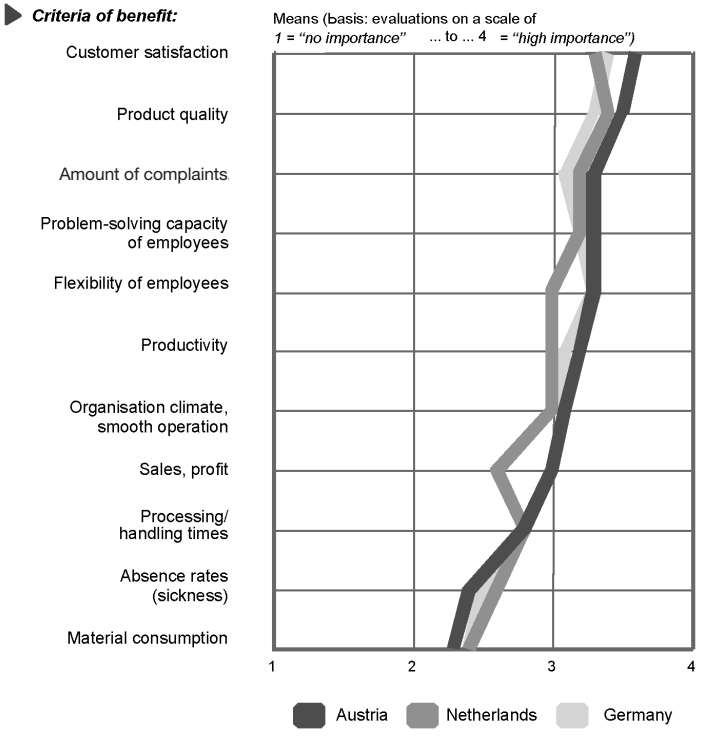
Those questioned in the survey were asked to assess how important different criteria for ascertaining the benefits of continuing training were in their companies (see also Diagram 8). Customer satisfaction and product quality were assigned the most importance as benefit criteria in the companies surveyed in the three countries. The amount of complaints is also assigned a high degree of importance by the companies with respect to benefit evaluation. The effect of continuing training on the problem-solving capability and the flexibility of employees also plays an important role for the companies in determining benefits. On the other hand, the absenteeism rate of employees and the amount of material consumption are considered by those companies surveyed to be clearly less suitable measures for evaluating the benefits of continuing training.

Within the context of training control, benefit assessment not only serves to legitimise the continuing training which has been carried out but also particularly enables decisions to be taken about future training programmes. Judging the benefits and establishing the consequences which result from this takes place on different corporate levels, in particular by the management, the specialist superiors or continuing training department.[9] Those who were surveyed very often said that the specialist superiors decided on the benefits of continuing training and decide

9 Multiple answers were possible in the survey.

on the future activities on this basis. This is the case in almost nine tenths of the Austrian companies, seven tenths of the German companies and six tenths of the Dutch companies. In the Netherlands however (in more than four fifths of companies) the company management plays a more central role in assessing the benefits and determining future continuing training programmes. In Austria and Germany, however, the management only makes such decisions in around half of the companies. It is least often the case that the continuing training department is responsible for benefit assessment and the determining of future programmes. This is the case in around two fifths of the Austrian and Dutch companies and in around a quarter of the German companies.

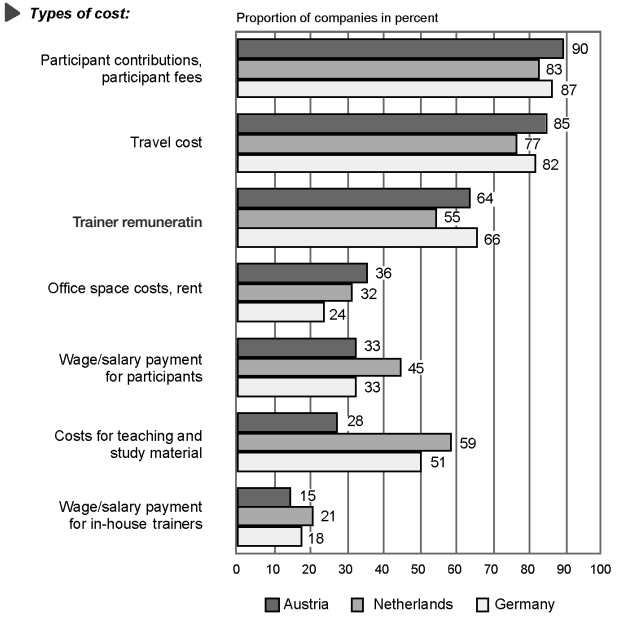
Diagram 8: Importance of Different Criteria of Benefit in the Companies Surveyed



3.3.4 Costs of the Corporate Training Activities

The creation of cost transparency in the field of continuing training is an additional aspect of training control. An exact knowledge of the costs is a prerequisite for estimating the cost-benefit relations with respect to the training activities which have been implemented so as to be able to judge in the end whether the continuing training was "worthwhile" for the company. (See for example WALDEN 2000 et al.) By far the majority of companies carry out a separate recording of the continuing training costs (at least for particular cost types). Only very few of the companies surveyed said that they do not record the continuing training costs at all with only about a tenth saying this in Austria and Germany and just under a fifth in the Netherlands. In the remaining companies the most common system is to inquire into participant contributions and participant fees as well as the travel costs

Diagram 9: Separate Recording of Different Types of Cost of Training Activities in the Companies Surveyed



incurred by the participants in the case of external continuing training programmes (see also Diagram 9). With respect to the in-company training activities it is most often the case that the fees for the trainers are recorded, while determining the proportionate costs for the premises used happens considerably less often.

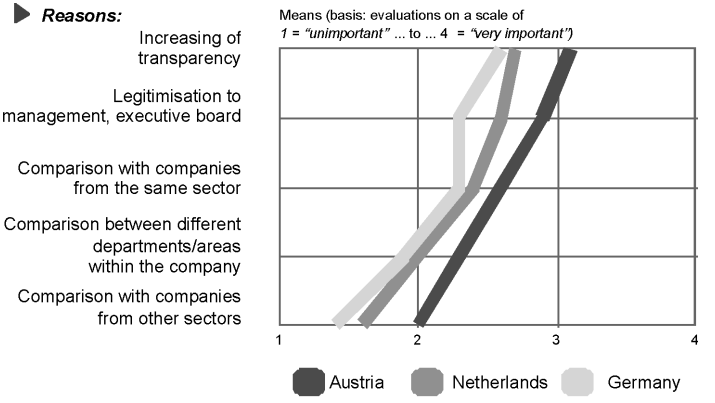
Calculating the payment of wages/salary for the participants, i.e. the proportionate wages and salaries which are apportioned to the time spent in training occurs more often in the Dutch firms surveyed than in those from Austria and Germany. The clearest country-specific difference is to be found with the recording of the costs for teaching and study materials, which occurs significantly more often in the Dutch and German companies than in the Austrian ones. The least-practised system in the companies surveyed in all three countries is the calculating of wage and salary payments for in-company continuing training personnel.

3.3.5 Specification Figures and Benchmarking in Corporate Continuing Training

Figures are not only of particular importance for general business management controlling, but also for training control. (See for example Pieler 2000 et al.) Within the framework of training control, figures give information on the training activities carried out in a company and form an important basis upon which to make decisions on the planning of future training processes. (See for example Brettel 2000, Seeber 2000 et al.) On the basis of measures, transparency can be created over the entire corporate continuing training process. This enables statements on the status of the process and development situation of continuing training in the company. The establishing of specification figures can moreover provide important clues to help the company to benefit from continuing training programmes. Specification figures also offer the possibility however of comparing one's own continuing training activities with other companies from the same or other segments of industry. In so doing, the extent to which there are large differences compared to other companies can be established, e.g. with respect to the participation rate in continuing training or the amount of investment in continuing training. In larger companies, in-company comparisons, e.g. between the departments or business areas, can be of interest. The corporate decision-taking units can gain sound information from this on, for example, the scale on which training activities take place in the individual business areas and on whether with the introduction of new products or technologies corresponding continuing training programmes are also planned and implemented in the areas in question.

Increasing transparency in the field of corporate continuing training is seen as the most important objective of ascertaining figures in the companies surveyed in the three countries (see also Diagram 10). The legitimisation of continuing training activities, i.e. the proof of its necessity and effectiveness, is also given as an important reason relatively often. The comparison with companies from the same sector is likewise described as important by several companies. The establishing

Diagram 10: Reasons for Determining Continuing Training Figures in the Companies Surveyed



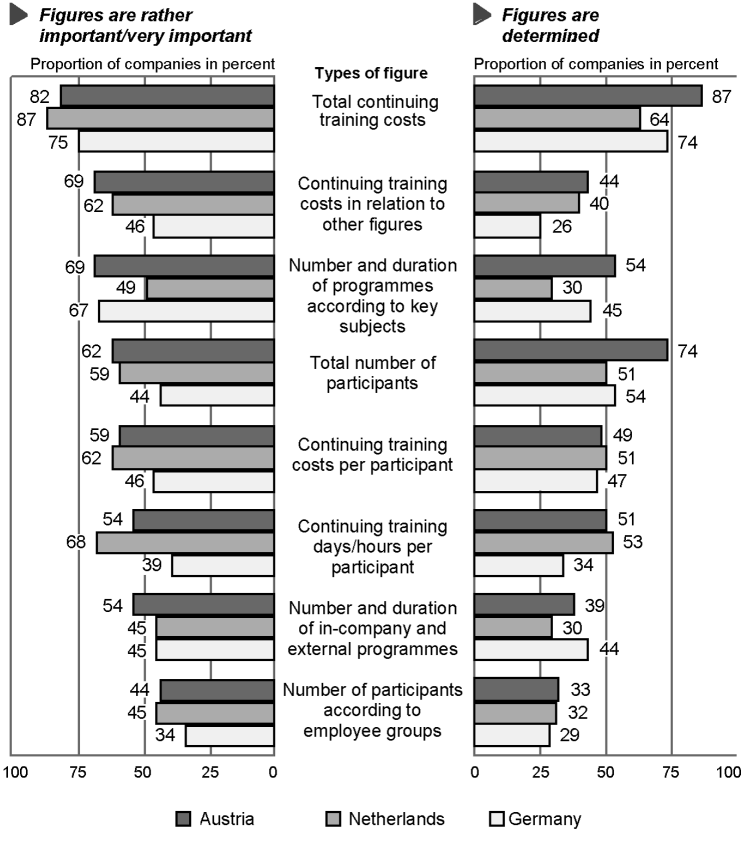
of figures, on the other hand, is used less often to carry out in-company comparisons which may be connected with the fact that only larger companies are suited to this. The least importance is attributed to the recording of figures for comparisons with companies from other sectors. All in all, it is noticeable that the importance of specification figures with respect to all purposes is seen to be far greater in the Austrian companies surveyed than in the Dutch and German companies.

The specification figures which are considered to be important by the companies are not always recorded systematically. Apparently, recording often fails due to the effort involved. This becomes clear when comparing the way in which the different companies surveyed in the three countries assess the importance of central specification figures for continuing vocational training and to what extent they are ascertained (see also Diagram 11). Determining the total cost of corporate continuing training is seen as important by a high proportion of the businesses. This is carried out in Germany correspondingly often and in Austria even more so, while in the Netherlands a noticeably lower proportion of the companies record their total cost.[10] The costs of continuing training in relation to other corporate figures (e.g. wage and salary amounts, sales) and the costs per participant in the continuing training are also often judged to be important information by the companies surveyed in the three countries even though they are actually calculated far less often. The same is true for the number and duration

10 It cannot be assumed that all types of cost are included in the case of the companies which said that they determine the total costs of the continuing training.

of the programmes according to key subjects. Not quite as large is the difference between the assessment of the importance and the actual determining in the case of the figures for continuing training costs per participant, continuing training days/hours per participant, number and duration of the in-company and external programmes and the number of participants according to employee group. The number of participants in continuing training in total is recorded even more often on the other hand in the Austrian and German companies surveyed than would be warranted by the corresponding importance attributed to this figure.

Diagram 11: Assessment of Importance and Determining of Continuing Training Figures in the Companies Surveyed



3.4 Summary

As is shown by the results of the company survey in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany, those responsible for training and personnel differ in the importance they attribute to controlling in the area of continuing training. They are almost unanimous, however, in assigning training control a high degree of status in the future. Although a comprehensive system of control for continuing training is generally only in place in very few companies it is rarely the case in any of the larger companies that at least the important elements of training control are not applied. It is therefore the case in a large proportion of the companies surveyed that systematic determining of the training requirement is carried out regularly or from time to time, with several different processes being applied most of the time. Success control programmes for continuing training activities and for ensuring transfer/practical application are also carried out relatively often. Various, measurable criteria for assessing the benefits of the implemented training programmes are assigned an important role. A large majority of the companies also record the continuing training costs or at least individual important cost types.

It must be stressed that there are hardly any large country-specific differences in the results with respect to the individual elements of training control looked at. This is also particularly amazing since in Austria and Germany there has been an intense debate in many companies going back a long time on the subject of training control, whereas in the Netherlands training controlling has hardly been discussed as a comprehensive concept for the planning and control of corporate training work. It is to be stressed, however, that important individual elements of training control have nevertheless become part of corporate practice in the Netherlands to a similarly large extent as in Austria and Germany. It can be presumed that elements of training control are implemented on a similar scale in companies in other European countries even if it is not necessarily always the case that this is associated with the term training control.

A central objective of controlling in the field of corporate continuing training is to demonstrate the benefits of the training efforts so as to legitimise the training expenses and to take decisions on future training programmes. An important database can be created for this using figures. At the moment, an actually systematical determination of the essential figures for corporate continuing training can, however, only be found in relatively few companies in the countries examined here. The increasing of transparency in the area of continuing training using figure systems and the development of practical instruments to ascertain benefits may, in future, be seen as the great challenge in the introduction and continuing development of training control in European companies.

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Continuing vocational training and skills development play an important role in managing rapidly changing job demands, in the realisation of strategic corporate goals and in the reorientation of enterprises. The success of company training measures is dependant to a large extent on whether the necessary training and qualification activities are developed and realised along with corporate goals and corporate processes. However, the appropriate procedures for this are absent in many European enterprises. For this reason there is an intensive search for new procedures for systematic planning, management, implementation and evaluation of company training measures.

The way in which enterprises in Europe prepare their workforce for future qualification demands and the measures and instruments they already utilise for the achievement of effective training as well as those which they deem necessary for the future is the subject of this publication. To this end comparative results from Austria, the Netherlands and Germany are presented.

The publication came into being within the framework of the “European comparison of controlling in corporate continuing training” research project, which was carried out with the financial support of the European Community’s Leonardo da Vinci programme.

W. Bertelsmann Verlag
Bielefeld

Federal Institute for
Vocational Training
Publication
Secretary-general • Bonn

ISBN 3-7639-0947-8
9 783763 909476